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THE MADRAS DEBT CONCILIATION BILL.

Rao Bahadur T. A. Ramalingam Chettiyar who had given notice to ask for leave to introduce the Madras Debt Conciliation Bill was not in his place when called by the hon. the President.

XI.—ELECTION OF A MEMBER TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR 1933-34.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I have to announce that Mr. J. K. Metherell is the only candidate nominated for election to the Finance Committee. As the number of vacancies is one, I hereby declare him duly elected to the Finance Committee."

XII.—RESOLUTION ON A MATTER OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST—REMISSION OF THE EXISTING RATE OF ASSESSMENT IN RYOTWARI LANDS IN THE PRESIDENCY.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The House will now pass on to the resolutions. On the last non-official day, the House was discussing the following resolution of Mr. Arasu and the amendments thereto, viz.:—

Resolution.

'This Council recommends to the Government that a remission of 25 per cent in the existing rate of assessment on ryotwari lands in the Presidency be granted during fasli 1343.'

Amendment of Mr. P. V. Krishnayya Choudari.

- (1) 'Add at the end the words "and that the remaining assessment on lands be collected in kind and not in money".'

Amendment of Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed.

- (2) 'After the words "assessment" and before the words "or ryotwari," insert the words "inclusive of water-cess and other cesses".'

"Further discussion of the resolution and the amendments will now continue."

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* Mr. K. R. VENKATARAMA AYYAR:—"Mr. President, Sir, this resolution was being discussed last time and when the discussion reached a certain stage, it was found that it might be an advantage if the discussion stood adjourned in view of the general expectation that the subject was one which had sufficiently arrested the attention of the Government and was likely to command sympathetic treatment at the hands of the Government. As orders of Government were expected and there was very good reason to anticipate that these orders might go a long way and give general satisfaction to the people concerned, it was thought that there was not much to be gained by pressing forward with the discussion when there was that expectation. Orders have no doubt since issued, but have those orders satisfied the expectations of the public or the requirements of the situation with which we are face to face? That is the question. Although it is impossible to get the Government to assent precisely to what the representatives of the people might demand on the floor of this House, it must be said that it should have been possible for the Government to go forward farther than they have done, and the ryots concerned all over the Presidency are now feeling

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considerable disappointment at the scanty relief which alone has been vouchsafed by the Government in their order.

"The resolution as moved on the floor of this House asks for a 25 per cent remission. In so far as the amendment has included water-cess and other cesses, I think it would be found at the end of the discussion that the general view of all the representatives of the people in this House would be in support of that amendment, because whatever remission is wanted is wanted not only in respect of the ryotwari assessment proper but also in respect of the water and other cesses. As for the precise percentage, which would be a fair percentage to remit, although the Government have not seen their way to remit or even suspend anything like 25 per cent, and although the Government have not even seen their way to adopt in toto the recommendations of the Finance Committee, it must be said that so far as the members of this House are concerned, there is good justification for them to urge that what would meet the requirements of the situation would be, not even a 25 per cent remission, but if possible a higher percentage. In view of the devastation by cyclone and floods in portions of the Presidency, it must be said that there is very good justification if only Government could manage to allow as much as 50 per cent remission. But, we the members of this House are not unaware of the impracticability of pressing forward excessive demands. Judging from the view-point of the ryots concerned, of what is barely just and strictly necessary to give them adequate relief, a 50 per cent reduction is equitable and absolutely necessary. But as Government has to be run and as notwithstanding the existing surplus amounts that are available as much as a 50 per cent reduction may not be feasible, I think it would really be not too much to stress that Government should in any case agree at least to a remission—not merely a suspension of 25 per cent.

"Meetings have been held all over the Presidency, not simply in certain districts but in all the districts, and the affected ryot population have passed unanimous resolutions asking for a 50 per cent reduction, 33-1/3 per cent reduction and in some cases 25 per cent reduction. The Government have been duly informed from all over the Presidency of these resolutions. Conferences have been held almost everywhere and at the top of all these district, village and taluk conferences, there was a conference of the ryotwari landholders held in Madras quite recently on the 27th. On that occasion, the opinion of the ryotwari landholders of the whole Presidency was focussed and a strong case was made out for a remission of at least 33-1/3 per cent. I think, Sir, this is a case in which it is not as if we are going to enlighten the Government with new facts and figures. It is quite clear that Government is in possession of all the data requisite and it is only a question of how far Government is willing to put its hands upon the available surplus moneys and to adjust its policy in various directions in order to give the ryot population this much needed relief. After all the ryotwari population, who constitute the bulk of the population of this Presidency, are the mainstay of the Government and at the present time what with

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agricultural indebtedness and the total volume of it, what with the continued low prices of agricultural products, what with the disturbance caused by the cyclone, floods and other abnormal happenings, Government has certainly to make up its mind to explore all ways of giving the ryot this much-needed relief. After all it has got to keep the ryots in possession of the lands in order that it may make out of the lands of the ryot population the revenue which you for all time expect to obtain from this main source of income. You cannot drive them off the land and yet think of land revenue. If you will only think of it from that aspect, I think you will feel constrained to grant that, as the present is an exceptional occasion, exceptional concessions must be the way of the Government in tackling the problem. It is not suggested at all that what may now be adopted by Government as an exceptional measure has for all time to be continued. No doubt, the question of land revenue and the principles of land revenue assessment require to be gone into with thoroughness and care and the whole subject has got to be rested upon an equitable and statutory basis. But that perhaps will be one of the first topics that will engage the attention of the new legislature under the Reformed Constitution. Meanwhile, all that is suggested is that as the present is an exceptional occasion, exceptional remedy should be resorted to in a sympathetic spirit by the Government not only from the point of view of the ryots but also from the selfish point of view of the Government itself because Government has to keep the land in the possession of the landholder in order to ensure a continuance of the land revenue as its main source of income. Unless therefore a reduction of at least 25 per cent, not only of the ryotwari assessment but also of water-cess and other cesses is agreed to on the present occasion, it will really be impossible for the landholders to continue in possession of the land and for the Government to make anything out of this important source of revenue.

"I therefore, without at all attempting to embarrass the position of Government, beg to suggest to them that they should go much farther than they have done in their recent orders. There was not sufficient reason for them to depart from the recommendation of the Finance Committee. Even if they went so far as the Finance Committee went, it would not really do. They should at least go forward further and agree to a 25 per cent reduction during this fasli—it should not be a case of mere suspension, because nothing is to be gained by allowing these arrears to accumulate, so that the Government might think of collecting them in the next year's demands from these over-burdened ryots. I would ask therefore that the whole matter should be reconsidered by the Government in a sympathetic spirit and that 25 per cent at least be remitted and not merely suspended."

* MR. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"Mr. President, on the last occasion, I spoke on my amendment, but not on the main motion."

* THE HON. THE PRESIDENT:—"I think the hon. Member has spoken on the main motion also last time."

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* Mr. R. M. PALAT:—"Sir, this question of the enhancement of assessment has been agitating us in Malabar for some time. It is well-known that in the Native States of Travancore and Cochin, where conditions are identical and which adjoin British Malabar, remissions of 12½ per cent in some cases and more in other cases have been made from the main or old assessment, while in British Malabar the remission has been made from the enhanced rates only although the old assessment in Malabar was considerably higher than that in the States. Again a flat rate of 12½ per cent remission on the enhanced rates has been given throughout Malabar irrespective of the area so that the remission varies from place to place as only certain taluks have been settled, or in the alternative there has been no remission where there has been no enhancement. Government will say that as the financial systems of the Native States and of our Government are different, they are justified in following different rules as regards remission. My reply to it would be that in that case, the sooner the British system is scrapped and the Native State system is adopted the better, because the Native States are able to carry on their Government efficiently and cheaply and with less burden to the people than our Government in British Malabar. There have been remissions not only on the West Coast, but we also find them in Mysore and Hyderabad. Sir, the whole of the present settlement has been based on the assumption of a rise in prices but Mr. Bajpai has made a statement on behalf of the Government in the Assembly that the price of paddy has sunk to one-third of what it was a few years ago. This admission practically cuts away the ground from under the feet of the present attitude of the Government; the only justification even according to our Government settlement rules for any enhancement of revenue is enhanced prices.

"Sir, Mr. Thorne, who is present here and who was manager for 12-30 some time of the Zamorin's Estate will tell you that it was with the p.m. greatest difficulty that he was able to get his own pay during the period of kist collection. Therefore, if this was the case in spite of his excellent management, how then could he, or the Government expect the more or less uneducated and untrained and happy-go-lucky janmi in Malabar to pay his assessment? Then, there is this bogey always brought before us that if we ask you to make any remission in our assessment, we cannot have any grants for Local Self-Government or any nation-building departments. We must, first of all, live before having anything to do with nation-building. First of all, the body must be there before we try to build the body. The Government seem to lay more stress on body-building than the existence of the body itself. Then, there was a statement made by the hon. Sir Archibald Campbell with regard to the introduction of ryotwari settlement in Malabar. I will only read from page 576 of the Fifth report; the statement of Mr. Thackeray:—

'This equality of condition, in respect to wealth in land; this general distribution of the soil among a yeomanry, therefore, if it be not most adapted to agricultural improvement, is best adapted to attain improvement, in the state of property, manners and institutions, which prevail in India; and it will be found still more adapted to the situation of the country, governed by a few strangers, where pride, high ideas, and ambitious thoughts, must be stifled. It is

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very proper, that in England, a good share of the produce of the earth should be appropriated to support certain families in affluence, to produce senators, sages, and heroes for the service and defence of the State, or, in other words, that great part of the rent should go to an opulent nobility and gentry, who are to serve their country in Parliament, in the army and navy, in the departments of science and liberal professions. The leisure, independence, and high ideas, which the enjoyment of this rent affords, has enabled them to raise Britain to the pinnacle of glory. Long may they enjoy it; but in India that haughty spirit, independence, and deep thought, which the possession of great wealth sometimes gives, ought to be suppressed. They are directly adverse to our power and interest. The nature of things, the past experience of all governments, renders it unnecessary to enlarge on this subject. We do not want generals, statesmen, and legislators; we want industrious husbandmen.

"I do not want to read the whole, but am confining myself to what is applicable to the principles of settlement. These were the motives that induced the Government in those days. But now, since the reforms, I would say, and I want to make this quite clear, that those motives cannot, in my opinion ought not, now be adduced. After the reforms, the whole spirit has changed, or ought to have changed, as India is to be taken into partnership. What might have affected the settlement of the Presidency in those days, should not in any way be the motive at present. Therefore, I would request the Government again to reconsider the question. While urging that this 25 per cent remission on the main assessment should be possible and acceptable to Government, I must state our disappointment that they have not agreed even to the Finance Committee's recommendation of a modest reduction of 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent of the enhanced and not the main rate. The revenue lost to Government by a remission of assessment can be met by a reduction of pay of the establishment. The pay was raised during the years of war on the ground of the increase in prices and in the cost of living. The prices have fallen according to Mr. Bajpai and so the cost of living also would have gone down. There is no reason whatever why the pay of the Imperial Services and all services throughout India should be kept up at the increased level and should not be reduced. We had a proposal yesterday to get the number of taluk boards reduced. It was then calmly accepted by the Government that a number of the taluk board employees would be thrown out of employment. If local board employees could be thrown out of employment, then why not Government employees also both Imperial and Provincial? To me, Sir, the pledge of the Madras Government is as good as that of the Imperial Government or of the Secretary of State. Is it only a certain class of people alone that can bear the reduction? It stands to reason that all classes of people in the services can bear the same reduction both in their numbers and their rates of pay. The Imperial Services and local services are only names and arrangements made for the convenience of administration. There is very little difference in the essential principle of security of employment. So, Sir, to make up any money that would be required by remission, we could first of all impose a drastic reduction of salaries. We could also impose income-tax on pensions and pays drawn outside India, from Indian revenues. It is a generally accepted principle, Sir, except in India, that if any money is drawn from a country by persons resident outside the country, the country

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from which the money is drawn is always entitled to impose an income-tax. I am not a financial expert; but these are a few sources that occur to me, which, with other means our Finance Member ought to be able to place before you, would be enough to make up for any reduction in land revenue assessment."

* Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. PATRO:—"On a matter like this, I am surprised to see that the benches on both sides are so sparsely populated. The attendance is very poor for the beginning. The interest on behalf of the poor cultivating ryot is manifested by the very little attention given to this very important subject. That shows that whatever one may talk outside when it comes to the solution of the problem and practical solution we have not been able to contribute anything to the ryot or the cultivator. From that preliminary remark, I may pass on and submit to the House that it is very easy to be popular by asking people not to pay taxes or to pay reduced taxation. But to say that you should pay higher tax or continue to pay what you have been paying is really very unpopular. By my position will be not to be influenced one way or other but to speak as an agriculturist and a landlord. Having responsibility of management of my lands, I am aware of the great blow that the landholders and cultivators have received on account of the present economic depression. There was a time when a garce of paddy was sold at Rs. 100 or 120; now the same quantity is sold at Rs. 40 to 42, and there is not even sufficient demand for this price. This has been so for the last two years. At the same time, we should remember that during past years landholders as well as agriculturists have had bumper crops, as it were, selling paddy at Rs. 110 and 120 for garce. From that time unnecessary luxuries were contracted and the standard of living was much raised. It is impossible now to maintain that standard under the present strained circumstances. Therefore, we should ask that the demand of land revenue may be reduced and that we need not pay for carrying the administration as we were paying before. This aspect of the question is not solely confined to this Province or India, but it is wide-spread all over the world. It is a world depression. As suggested by another speaker it should be considered not from the point of view of taluk or district, but from the point of view of the whole administration. The question being one of economic depression, are you prepared at present to stop all development in the administration? If you are prepared to say here in this Council that those Members of Government who adorn the Government Benches are merely there to mark time and do nothing for the advancement of the people, then of course there is justification in the very vehement remarks of my hon. Friend from Madura that not only 25 but even 33½ per cent should be remitted. On the other hand, we want the administration to be run on proper lines for the benefit of the people for which we are here and for which the hon. Members are also there. If anything has to be done to the people, is it fair to ask that one-third of the revenue of the Province should be cut down and yet the standard of efficiency and good administration should be maintained? How is it possible that both could be done at the same time? As hon. Members are aware, investments were made

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not by those who cultivate the lands, but by capitalists and money-lenders as lawyers and others. Hon. Members would also note that investors in coffee, rubber and various other concerns are also hard hit. Similarly with regard to investments in banks. Bank-rates were reduced from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to even 2 per cent. The investments in the Imperial Bank and other banks have also suffered in that way by the interest being reduced because there is no demand for the money from the banks. Thus, this is a point to be considered not from the point of view of electors and elections, but from the point of view of justice to the taxpayer, namely, is it possible that investments which yielded a favourable rate could now be expected to yield the same rate? Is it fair on the part of those that have invested money in land to claim a reduction as of necessity? Why then, when you, the mirasidars, purchased the lands and don't cultivate them yourselves, why do you want to profit yourself in the name of the economic depression? The economic depression has affected not one single class of people; it affects all classes of people. The capitalists and big landholders are most vociferous and loud in their protest. But what about the poor man? I cannot understand how the reduction meets the needs of the situation. It goes to the benefit of the big pattadars. What has the Government done for the sake of the poor man? If they had considered the remission in the case of those who pay less than 10 rupees, if they take up courage in their hands and say, "We are going to benefit the cultivating ryot, who toils and earns his own livelihood himself with his family. Relief goes to such a person," then, it will be an act of kindness on the part of the Government to the actual sufferer. But, Government have reduced $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in the case of those districts where resettlement was made.

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"It is benefiting the big pattadars, the idle pattadars and the pattadars who have made money as money-lenders. It does not at all benefit the poor pattadars. If remission had been made entirely in the case of the poor ten-rupee pattadars, it can be said to be a very necessary thing. Take the case of concession in the income-tax. Then, Sir, what is the idea underlying this remission? Is it the case that the prices are low and therefore this remission is necessary? The poor cultivators borrow money at high rates of interest from the big landholders and are in course of time swallowed up by the latter. How does this relief help them? This should be realized by the Government.

"From another point of view also, I should say, the communiqué issued by the Government explaining their land revenue policy, must convince every one that it is impossible for them to do more than what they have done. The communiqué effectively answers all the arguments that the basic principle of resettlement should be altered altogether. Those arguments really mean a complete revolution in the revenue policy of the Government. That reversal of the policy may take place after the popular Government comes in. When there is the popular element on the Treasury Benches, you will have opportunities of changing the land revenue policy and adjusting other demands on the Government. But at present it is impossible to change the resettlement policy. To talk of basic principles on which the assessment is levied in this

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Presidency is all right. What is wrong with it nobody has shown. Mr. Palat asked, when it is possible for Mysore and Hyderabad to remit a large percentage of their land revenue, why is it not possible for the Madras Government to do likewise. I do not defend the Madras Government at all; but what I do say is that you should know the large amounts that are budgeted every year in our province for expenditure on development departments. I have looked into the budgets of two Indian States and on a comparison with them I find that there is no analogy. It is possible for them to show a higher percentage of remission. It is no good bringing in the conditions obtaining in Native States for comparison with ours."

Mr. R. M. PALAT:—"On a point of order, Sir. I had not in my mind those considerations at all."

* Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. PATRO:—"I am only pointing out that the analogy of the Native States is not correct."

"Then again it is said that the revenue policy of the Government should be radically altered so as to effect a change in the method of classification. The critics forget in this connexion that in the resettlements there is no reclassification of the soils. What is done at resettlements is to note any rise in prices."

Mr. R. M. PALAT:—"There has been reclassification."

* Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. PATRO:—"During resettlement they have only fixed up the tarams, noted the rise in prices and settled the increment not exceeding $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. That being the case, it is wrong to say that the basic principle should be altered immediately. It has been a surprise to me to find no practical suggestion emanating from the critics though there is no dearth of criticism of the land revenue policy. Nobody has suggested in what manner that policy could be changed. I therefore say that it is not fair that the Government should give a uniform rate of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent remission for all people. As a tax-payer I feel that I have to pay for the sake of the big landholders. I do not want that the Government should mulct me and benefit the rich landholder. What the Government should do is this: they should take up the question whether they could give relief to the ten-rupee pattadar. That would be a wise thing to do to relieve the distressed condition of the poor people. Such action would really help the actual cultivator. To my mind there is no justification for any other proposal. I do not see any justification for saying that 25 per cent or $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the taxes should be remitted as suggested."

* Mr. U. C. SUBRAHMANYA BHATT:—"Mr. President, had it not been for the two or three statements made by the hon. Member, Sir Patro, I should never have risen to speak in support of this motion which is sure to get the unanimous support of this House."

"In the first place my hon. Friend stated that Mr. Palat was wrong in stating that, because remission was granted in Cochin and Travancore, remission should be given to Malabar also. I say, Sir, Sir Patro has not understood the proposition put forward by Mr. Palat. I may

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at once say that the rate of assessment in Cochin and Travancore is far less than the rate obtaining in Malabar and South Kanara, though the condition of the soil and the nature of the water-supply and the mode of cultivation are the same in all these places. Still, Sir, those Governments have realized that the depression is so severe and the fall in prices so catastrophic that they should go to the rescue of the ryots in their territories. Those benign Governments have given a remission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and 25 per cent even when their tax-payers have a comparatively lighter burden than their neighbours in Malabar and South Kanara. It therefore stands to reason that in Malabar and South Kanara where the conditions and the sources of cultivation are similar to those in Travancore and Cochin the ryot's burden is far heavier; they should be given a remission of 25 per cent at least if not more.

"My learned Friend went on to argue that the interest on deposits in banks is low and so also the income derived from the investment in land and that therefore the ryots' difficulties are the same and he should not complain. Both come under the same category and therefore no relief need be given to the ryots. I may tell him that if the income of the investors in banks goes down they are charged income-tax only on the income they get, whether big or small, whereas in the case of the investors in land, whatever be the income derived, the assessment proposed and charged is the same. That is very unsatisfactory. That is the fallacy in the argument of the hon. Member from Ganjam. Far from showing that relief should not be given to the ryots, the illustration cited by my Friend supports the case of the ryots. Where income-tax is collected on the lower returns of the investor in banks the tax on the land should be also proportionate to the income received by the ryot and as the present income is less, the tax should be proportionately reduced.

"Then my hon. Friend said that, if we give a lower scale of pay to the Government servants, the efficiency of the Government would suffer. Sir, when prices went up and Government servants found it difficult to pull on, this House was called upon to vote for increased salaries for them. Did the House then grudge to vote for that grant? No. Now, why should they stick on to their high salaries and not come to the rescue of the ryots when the prices have gone down? When the prices were low and the Government servants were getting lower rates of salary, did efficiency in the administration suffer? By a cut in pay, how can the efficiency of the Government suffer now in view of the fact that prices are low?

"Sir, so far as South Kanara is concerned, I have got a special appeal to make. The conditions there are very miserable. So far as the ryots of South Kanara are concerned, I have given notice of a question which is yet to be answered asking for the number of holdings which have been put up for auction and sold for non-payment of assessment. A list of that kind would convincingly show how hard hit the ryots of South Kanara are. There have been a number of conferences of landholders of South Kanara. The South Kanara District 'Landholders' Association presided over by my hon. Friend Mr. Sami Venkatachalam

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Chetti recently passed a resolution that nothing short of 25 per cent remission would meet the ends of justice and relieve the sufferings of the ryots of South Kanara. It was followed by two or three taluk conferences and there also resolutions have been passed to the same effect. So far as South Kanara is concerned, it is a country where the Government have not spent anything for water-supply. The South Kanara agriculturists depend solely upon the monsoon and upon private enterprise for water-supply so far as cultivation is concerned but still what is the condition there? The taxation on land is far higher than in other places in the presidency though the soil is comparatively not so rich as in many other parts of the presidency. Such being the case, why should South Kanara not be given a higher rate of reduction in the assessment than the mere 10 per cent reduction which is to be given to all the areas? I therefore request, Sir, this House, apart from what Sir Patro has said, to pass this resolution unanimously and come to the rescue of the ryots in this very critical hour. This House has always been ready at the time of emergencies to vote emergency grants to meet the needs of the Government and why should the Government not now come to the rescue of the ryots at this juncture?"

* Mr. T. C. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR:—"I do not think many words 1 p.m. will be needed from me to support a proposition containing so reasonable a request and I would not have intervened in the debate but for the fact that the hon. Member, Sir Patro, has come forward with a speech which on close analysis appears to be contradictory in itself and also inconsistent with the whole principle underlying the proposal. One wonders whether he is not saying that the hon. the Revenue Member and his Colleagues have done a great mistake in granting a 12½ per cent remission in the assessment of land revenue. One wonders again, if Sir Patro had been consulted, whether he would have advised giving any remission at all. At the same time he has come forward with a proposal which takes one's breath away. He would support a proposal for the remission of revenue due from the poorer pattadars paying Rs. 10 and below. Is it merely by way of a controversy that he raises this proposition or is he convinced that a case for remission exists and that remission should be given only to poorer pattadars? And by a peculiar process of unexpressed definition he has assured himself that pattadars paying Rs. 10 and less are poor people and that pattadars paying Rs. 10 and above are rich people, and that in any scheme of remission all rich people should be taxed for the purpose of remitting the revenue payable by poorer pattadars paying Rs. 10 and less. I submit that Sir Patro's speech has not only not added any useful arguments one way or the other, but has created an amount of confusion and contradiction. As for the merits of the proposal under debate, it goes without saying that we are passing through serious times and very distressing conditions. Even in South India we have not escaped from the recent difficulties in the case of agricultural lands. On account of heavy storm in the Indian Ocean two or three districts in the South have suffered very seriously during the last week—the squally weather has caused considerable damage to

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both paddy harvested and also about to be harvested. The difficulties of the ryots have increased owing to the fact that prices have not shown any tendency to rise substantially. In these circumstances, would it be a sufficient relief if the ryot is given merely a remission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and that too in the shape of suspension? What would be the effect of this suspension? It would amount to an enhancement of revenue if it is sought to be collected next year. What I submit is that there should not be merely a suspension, but that there should be a remission and that too of a higher percentage."

Diwan Bahadur M. GOPALASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"Just like my hon. Friend, Mr. Bhatt, I say I would not have intervened in the debate but for the fact that my hon. Friend, Sir Patro, made certain remarks which are somewhat surprising. That a man of practical experience and a person who occupied a responsible position in the Government for long years should have made such remarks is a thing that one cannot understand. For example, he said that the Government should have a census of all pattadars owning 10 acres. Then he had recourse to a plan whereby only small pattadars paying Rs. 10 and less should be given relief and that other pattadars should not be given any relief and if at all any relief is given to them only some of them should be given relief. I wonder whether he was speaking as a man of practical experience."

Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. PATRO:—"On a point of personal explanation, I said that every pattadar should be given remission according to the extent of land which he possesses, the smaller pattadar of course having the larger claim. It would be nothing short of ignorance to say that a census or a classification is required of all pattadars owning 10 acres of land."

Diwan Bahadur M. GOPALASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"The information given by Sir Patro has not advanced the matter further. I think he is carrying coal to New Castle. I know much better than he does. He is a man belonging to Metropolis. I come from a place where I am in touch with the people who are large pattadars and also those who own 10 acres or even less than that, and I can speak with more authority on the subject than the hon. Gentleman, Sir Patro. He has put forward a very impracticable proposition and I do not think it is possible for any Government to lay down such a hard and fast rule. I am very glad that the Government have been more sympathetic. My Friend, Mr. R. M. Palat, referred to other Governments. I should think the only point he had in view was to emphasize the fact that Governments of Native States and other Provinces are sympathetic towards the ryots. Apart from that I do not think he had any other consideration. I do not think he was indulging in any manner of destructive criticism. What he wanted to point out and I also wish to point out is that every Government throughout the world is trying to be sympathetic to the ryot who contributes really to the resources of the State. When every other Government and administration is sympathetic, it is but natural that the Madras Government

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should also be sympathetic towards their ryots, and we have all been very grateful to the Government for having issued the communiqué thus giving relief to the ryots. So far as I am concerned, it does not matter much about the percentage of remission that they have given. I need hardly say that a 25 per cent remission would satisfy me. After all, the percentage is fixed by them according to certain data. All that I am concerned with is that so far as the Ceded districts, Bellary, Coimbatore and Salem districts are concerned, the Government have only granted a suspension of $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. That is a point which the hon. the Revenue Member will, I hope, carefully consider. As one of his hon. Colleagues knows, we, in those districts, are in a very unfortunate position this year. Although we are not confronted with drought this year, we are suffering on account of excess of rains. We have double the normal quantity of rain and in consequence the crops have been spoiled or destroyed. In this connexion I also think that it is very necessary that I should bring to the notice of the hon. the Revenue Member that we are attacked with epidemics in our districts. All these add to the miseries of the ryots. For all these reasons I want to make an earnest appeal to the hon. the Revenue Member that there ought not to be any distinction between wet and dry lands. In this connexion, I want to remove one misapprehension in the minds of hon. Members of this House, viz., that the ryots are ashamed of begging. It is because of this economic distress that they come forward with appeals for relief. I hope this point will also be borne in mind by the Government in giving relief to the ryots."

* Sriman M. G. PATNAIK Mahasaya:—"Sir, the question raised is quite clear and I need not add anything to that but for the controversial turn it has taken on account of Sir Patro's speech. Sir Patro said that remission of rent should be raised in proportion to the lowness of assessment that is paid, and that smaller pattadars should be given a higher rate of remission than bigger pattadars. Of course almost every other hon. Member said that that was an absurd proposition. I think that is not so absurd as it appears to some of the hon. Members. The analogy of investors who invest money in business or in banks cannot be brought in here. Of course people who invest money in business or in banks are satisfied even if they get a lesser return than what they anticipated and are satisfied with a small profit. But in the case of small pattadars they have to live with the small income that they get from the lands. So if the whole amount or a large portion is not remitted, they will not be able to get on. Sir Patro wanted to emphasize this point. That is all. The only difficulty is whether it would be practicable for the Government to make such a differentiation. It is quite possible that a person might have purchased a small holding and be paying Rs. 10 towards assessment of that land or that a big pattadar might have a large family to maintain. Of course there are many considerations to be taken into account. If you want to take into consideration all those factors it would be impossible for any one

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to come to any conclusion with regard to the amount of remission to be given in the case of the one or the other. On this ground, Sir Patro's proposition may be unworkable, but one cannot say that it is absurd.

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p.m.

"Another thing that I wish to say is this: Often you find big pattadars coming forward and placing their grievances before the Government and asking them to give relief to them and also to the poorer pattadars. It is not always possible for the poorer pattadars to come forward with appeals. So the bigger pattadars should be sympathetic to persons who cultivate their lands. But these bigger pattadars want to collect as much as possible from the people who cultivate the lands, though they try to get as much remission as possible from Government. Therefore the bigger landholder should have sympathy towards the people who cultivate the soil. These big mirasidars do not have as much sympathy for the cultivators under them as they expect to get from the Government for themselves. The Government have come forward to give some relief to the ryotwari tracts. Certain amendments agreed to by all the parties were put before the Council during the discussion of the Estates Land Act Amendment Bill, but they were ruled out of order. In spite of the fact that those amendments have been agreed to by all the parties, the Government have not taken any steps to place them on the statute book. The tenants in estates deserve relief more than the tenants in ryotwari tracts. I appeal to the hon. the Revenue Member to lose no time to place those 'agreed' amendments on the statute book.

"I want to say a few words with regard to the Ghoomsur division of my district. Some time ago, the hon. the Revenue Member was pleased to observe that the kist should be collected only after the harvest is over. In my district as well as in several other districts harvest is over only in the month of January. Therefore, the kist should be made payable only in February. But that is not the case at present. Representations were made to the Collector, the Board of Revenue and the Government on this matter. The Government said: 'You people are going away to Orissa and we are not going to give you any relief even though it is in accordance with the principle enunciated by us.' That is very unjust and I hope the hon. the Revenue Member will revise the orders that the Government have passed.

"There is also another difficulty from which the people of the Ghoomsur division suffer. That division adjoins a number of feudatory States of Orissa. Large quantities of paddy are dumped into Ghoomsur from those States and this has reduced the price of paddy in Ghoomsur to an abnormal extent. Even Russellkonda is 50 miles from Berhampur and paddy has to be carried in carts. In these circumstances, the people of Ghoomsur are not able to sell their paddy or they get very low prices for it. The assessment should be reduced by 50 per cent if some relief should be given to them. A cartload of paddy which used to sell for Rs. 40 is now selling at Rs. 10 or Rs. 12. In

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spite of all these the Government have not taken any steps to prevent the dumping of paddy into the Ghumsur division notwithstanding the several representations made to them."

Mr. G. SIMHACHALAM PANTULU:—"Sir, however fallacious the arguments advanced by Sir Patro may have been, I see there is a principle involved in it. Even in municipalities, in the case of profession-tax, we see that the same principle is applied. We always see that anything that we do serves the greatest number of people. On that principle, I think the suggestion made by Sir Patro seems to be sound. But whatever that may be, it has become a commonplace with us here for people to advance some arguments as they are anxious to get a remission and for the Members on the Treasury Benches to advance some other arguments as they want to avoid giving a remission. I am not going to waste the precious time of the House by advancing commonplace arguments, but I see that the difficulty of the whole thing lies here. The officers who go about collecting the revenue are not given full freedom to report to the Government the actual state of affairs. If they felt themselves free to report to the Government the actual state of affairs, they would certainly do so. I find that many officers are afraid to report the actual state of affairs to the Government for fear they might lose their jobs. If the Government are keen about granting remission, they can find a way out of the difficulty. I appeal to the hon. the Revenue Member and the hon. the Finance Member to remove this popular impression, namely, that even though the representatives of the people know the facts about the condition of the people and vigorously represent them to the Government, it is impossible for them to convince the Government of the great need there is for a remission and get the required remission. If we are able to persuade the Government to give a remission at least this year as desired by many hon. Members, we will be justifying our existence here as representatives of the people. Otherwise it is a disgrace for any representative to come here, to make his representations to the Government and every time be told by the Government that they would not believe them and that they would rely only on the reports of their own local officers, who, as I have already pointed out, are afraid to report to the Government the actual state of affairs. If that is the state of affairs, there is no use of anyone continuing as a Member of this House. What is the use of discussing this question time and again and invariably getting the reply, 'No'? I suggest that if the Government felt any doubt about the actual state of affairs, they might appoint a committee to go into the question and send a detailed report. Mr. Gopalaswami Mudaliyar made some suggestions with regard to certain districts and some other hon. Members made some suggestions with regard to the deltaic districts. But Guntur is in an intermediate position being half dry and half wet. The conditions there are peculiar. It is only if we can do something to the ryots—I mean by ryots, the actual cultivators, the agriculturists—that we can justify our existence as representatives of the people. I

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appeal to the Treasury Benches once again to see that we are not looked upon as fools in the estimation of the public by saying 'no' to all our representations."

* Rao Bahadur C. NATESA MUDALIYAR:—"Mr. President, I am extremely thankful to Sir Patro for having stimulated the discussion in the House. The House was getting rather dull and perhaps Sir Patro thought to himself: 'If I threw a pill too big to be swallowed, they might struggle with it to throw it out and in that process get themselves stimulated.'

"Sir, this is not a question of Malabar or South Kanara, but this is a question of the Presidency as a whole. It is well known to all, I suppose even the Treasury Benches understand it, that the ryots are overtaxed. Some districts have been vociferous in their demands for reduction, but I should like to ask: 'What about the district of Chingleput?' That district is not so productive as Tanjore. Even in Tanjore which is considered to be most prosperous, the net income on an acre of land is only Rs. 7 in the case of first-class lands. The net income of the first-rate land is only Rs. 40 for a veli. How is it possible for a man to cultivate a veli if he has only Rs. 50 for maintenance of his family? If that is the state of affairs in Tanjore, how much worse should it be with districts like Chingleput where there has been no rain at all this year. I am glad the Collector there is taking some interest in the question and he may even recommend a remission of 50 per cent. But even that 50 per cent will not meet the needs of the situation.

"There is a universal complaint about the low prices of agricultural produce. These are selling at the same rate as they were selling in pre-war days. I do not think we should attempt to raise the prices of these foodstuffs, for the poor man will suffer. What we should do is to let the foodstuffs sell at the same price as they do now and cut the cost of administration. There has been a demand for Indianization of our services, and the justification for the demand is found in the fact that an Indianized service will be cheaper than the present service. If that is so, there is no meaning in Indianizing the service and paying the same high salaries to Indian Officers as to European Officers. A Provincial Service Collector may get two-thirds of the pay of an Indian Service Collector. The Governor, the Members of the Executive Council and the Judges of the High Court may get the same salaries as they get now; I do not object to that. But the officers in the other higher posts should get much lower pay. It is the elevation of economic condition of the people that is really at the bottom of the demand for Indianization. What is the use of having a top-heavy administration with many high-salaried officers, if that can be done only by squeezing the ryot and starving the development and nation-building departments? I appeal to the hon. the Revenue Member and the hon. the Finance Member to settle this question of salaries once for all. We cannot go on repeating the same tale every year of an increasing expenditure and thus not reducing the tax. If

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an European element is wanted in our services, let us pay the European officers overseas allowances so that they may get the same pay as they are getting now. But let the Indians who are serving the Government remember that they are serving their country. In Germany and other places, the Government servants get much lower salaries. The Captain of a German Ship gets Rs. 250, whereas the Captain of an English ship gets Rs. 600 or Rs. 700."

MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"What about Ministers?"

* RAO BAHADUR C. NATESA MUDALIYAR:—"So long as the Members of the Executive Council get a certain pay, the Ministers also should get the same pay. Of course, we may change the rate in the Reformed Constitution, but for the present both should get the same pay.

"With regard to the benefit that the mirasidars will get, of course, if a small cultivator gets two annas, a big mirasidar will get Rs. 100. We should not grudge what the mirasidar gets. The two annas will be quite as useful to the small cultivator as the Rs. 100 to the big mirasidar. Let everybody be benefited. But there is no use of squeezing the ryot and starving the nation-building departments and inviting an iniquitous impost from the Central Government once more. I warn the Government seriously against this. So many years have passed and still there has been no improvement in the nation-building departments. I cannot say no but not enough. The hon. Member, Mr. Gopalaswami Mudaliyar, said that the Government is sympathetic, but I request them to be sufficiently sympathetic. If they remit 25 per cent, then they would be sympathetic. They have given this 12½ per cent remission, I believe, because of so much agitation.

"Most probably there will be a Commission sitting to apportion the contributions from various Provinces to the Central Government. That Commission may look at our accumulated balances and saddle us with a heavy contribution. Would they know that these balances have been possible only by squeezing the ryots and starving the nation-building departments? Would they know the difficulties that the ryots suffer by not being able to make both ends meet, especially the ryots in the Chingleput district? Resettlement once in thirty years does not mean that the Government should go on increasing the taxes irrespective of the conditions existing. If the conditions warrant, the taxes should be reduced. I request the Government to grant a remission of 25 per cent and to treat the Chingleput district with greater favour than other districts."

After Lunch (2-30 p.m.)

* MR. P. PEDDI RAJU:—"Mr. President, Sir, I have to intervene in this debate. Last year a similar resolution was unanimously passed and there was not much contest. But unfortunately just now our knight Sir Patro uttered a note of warning to the Government practically against conceding the demands of the ryotwari landholders. I

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am sorry that Sir Patro had removed himself from Ganjam and has become a metropolitan and has failed to represent the grievances of the voters whom he actually intended to represent. Moreover, my Friend hails from a district which is mostly zamindari and I feel that he can never realize the grievances of the ryotwari tracts. All the same, though the hon. the Revenue Member is absent, I can appeal to Mr. Thorne, the Revenue Secretary. The appalling condition of the upland ryots has been well described by my hon. Friend, Mr. Gopalaswami Mudaliyar. People generally think that the delta ryots are in a better position. I come from a district which is mainly deltaic. I think that Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts are like Godavari and Kistna districts. No doubt there was a time when people in these districts were in a better position. But the plight of the delta ryots now is much worse than it ever was. The price that is now existing is Rs. 2-6-0 per bag. Ten bags an acre is said to be normal yield in the delta. Even in the Government accounts—in the adangal—when ten bags is the yield, they put it as 16 annas crop. Last year in answer to my Friend, Mr. Krishnayya, the hon. the Revenue Member said that there may be lands in the delta which may yield 20 bags. This is an extraordinary circumstance which I can never realize. There is hardly a single acre in the delta which yields 20 bags. The average yield of land is only 10 bags an acre. At the rate of Rs. 2-6-0 a bag, the gross income per acre is less than Rs. 25. The average Government assessment in the delta is Rs. 10 to Rs. 12. It is not less than Rs. 10. The gross yield per acre is 10 bags an acre. What are the charges that have to be incurred by the ryotwari landholder for cultivation expenses, for harvest and for seasonal variations and other things? What is the benefit that he derives? Of course the Government may say and the hon. the Revenue Member has said that large amounts of money are being spent for the improvement of drainage and irrigation channels and that Government activities will suffer in the way of undertaking developments throughout. I have to say to the Government that the ordinary agriculturist does not care whether the Government undertake development in other directions so long as he suffers from the distress caused by the economic depression and the prevailing low prices. My hon. Friends have said that the cost of administration by way of salaries is too heavy and I will have to tell the Government that the ordinary peon in any department of the Government is much better than a landholder who has got 100 acres at the present time. It is high time that the Government should open their eyes and see that the ryotwari landholder is not oppressed. There is no reason to suck the blood of the ryot and then pay fat to the officials and some Round Tablers to go to England. It is advisable that the Government should retrench their establishments and cut short their expenditure and see that the general population in the Presidency do not suffer on account of the economic depression. Whether it is reasonable or unreasonable, whether the land revenue policy of the Government is placed on the statute book or not, it is the duty of any Government whether it is the British Government or a

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Swaraj Government to see that the general mass of the people do not suffer on account of the present economic depression. Sitting here, it is very easy to say that it is easy to pay the land revenue. The question is 'How are you to pay the heavy assessment, how are you to get from the landholder a portion of the produce he gets from the land?' I am sorry to see that the hon. the Revenue Member and the hon. the Finance Member have not realized the great distress existing throughout the Presidency. It is not one district that suffers. Every representative of every district complains about his own district, because he knows the state of things there. But it is for the Government to realize the difficulty felt throughout the Presidency. I have heard the officials saying that the registration of documents and the price of land are still found to be high. The reason is nobody is able to pay his dues and all lands are going into the hands of the money-lenders. If this state of things continues it is not only the poor ryot but also the rich ryot is going to insolvency. If the Government do not come to the rescue, I am sure and I can prophesy that all the lands will go to the money-lenders. Then there will be a revolution, if not some bloodshed and other things. The hon. the Revenue Member has toured throughout the Presidency. I do not know whether he has been intimated of this fact. There are places in the district where the money-lenders' houses are threatened to be dacoited some day or other. The villagers have all joined and they are trying to give any amount of trouble to the money-lender because the money-lender does not take the land and there is no way of paying the dues. It is not simply a question of paying assessment to the Government. The Government will have to consider the question from an economic point of view and to see how they can give relief. Twenty-five per cent remission is a very reasonable demand which the Legislative Council has made. I do not think anybody will be satisfied with 25 per cent. From the administrative point of view some amount of revenue is necessary and the Government must be satisfied with 75 per cent of the assessment. So I appeal to the hon. the Revenue Member and the Finance Member to see that at least this demand of the Legislative Council is met. I also request the Government that 25 per cent of the kist may be remitted this year and that they can wait and see what should be done next year. Last year the hon. the Revenue Member said that there was a tendency for rise in prices; but that prophecy has not been fulfilled. This year there has been a further fall of 25 per cent in the prices. The hon. the Revenue Member admitted last year that prices were too low and said that there is some chance of improvement. What is the condition to-day? It is much worse. So, the Government should not be blind to the distress existing in the country; they should open their eyes and give succour to the ryots."

* MR. G. LAKSHMANA REDDI:—"Sir, I rise to support the motion. Of course my hon. Friend, Sir Patro, has got quite a different view-point of the Famine Code. According to the Government at any rate, when there are no crops, the Government can interfere and give remissions. But according to Sir Patro, where there is no crop, it is only

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the poor man paying a kist of Rs. 10 and less that should be given remission and not the other class of ryots. I do not think that his view will be accepted even by the Government.

"Coming to the question on hand, the Government suspended 12½ per cent kist last year in the case of some districts. But this year the Government have issued a communiqué stating that only 6½ per cent of the kist will be remitted in the case of dry lands and 12½ per cent remission in the case of wet lands all over the Presidency. I submit that the situation this year is worse than last year all over the Presidency. So far as the Ceded districts are concerned, I have personal knowledge. Dry lands predominate there. The ryots there are in a very distressing plight. The yield this year also was poor. Add to this the abnormal fall in prices. There is very poor demand for agricultural produce. In most cases the yield is not enough to cover the agricultural expenses incurred by the ryot. I think that, for this year, at least 25 per cent remission is necessary. There is a clear case for remission of 25 per cent. I therefore earnestly request the hon. the Revenue and the Finance Members to agree to the modest request of the Mover."

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p.m.

* Khan Bahadur MAHMUD SCHAMNAD SAHIB Bahadur:—"Sir, I do not understand, in fact I am very much surprised to see, how the Government failed to realize the distress prevailing among the people. If the Government had really known the difficulties, they would not have been so heartless. But I now see it is no wonder that the Government have not realized them when my hon. Friend, Sir Parasuram Patro, who says that he is an advocate of the cause of the people and who had been to England for the Round Table Conference to represent India, himself does not seem to have realized those difficulties. There is a sort of eyewash in his statement and I think nobody will be deceived by that. My friend says that the poor ryots who pay less than Rs. 10 should be given full remission and that the rich people should be made to pay, even so much as to cover the remission granted to the poor people. He knows very well that the Government will not accept such a proposal. There is no principle involved in that. It is only a camouflage. It is well known to the hon. Members here, and they have taken every opportunity to inform the Government of it, how acute the distress is that is prevailing in the country. I can speak about my own district with authority. There, so many very valuable lands have been sold for nominal prices, lands worth Rs. 50,000 have been sold for Rs. 2,000. There are several instances of this kind. Some time back, I asked a question to find out how many such lands were sold for nominal prices; the Government reply was that they had called for information and that the information had not been received.

"My friend, Dr. Natesa Mudaliyar said, it is not only a question of South Kanara or Malabar. It is true, but still there is something peculiar or special in the case of Malabar and South Kanara. Because, in all the other districts the tenants' improvements are not taxed, while in Malabar and South Kanara where you have no Government irrigation

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works and Government are not spending a pie for helping the ryots who cultivate their lands, tenants' improvements are taxed. Although there is copious rainfall for three or four months in the year, all the water is washed down to the ocean and no measures are taken by Government to conserve the water by either anicuts or bunds, etc. On former occasions attempts were made to induce Government to conserve some water by anicuts, etc., in order to help the ryots in cultivating second and third crops. As it is, the people have to spend a large amount of money for building anicuts, digging big wells and tanks, etc. All that is never taken into account in taxing lands in Malabar and South Kanara and they are charged just in the same way as lands on the East Coast where they have got irrigation facilities, etc. You know, Sir, even recently several crores of rupees were spent on the Cauvery-Mettur project. When you compare the assessment in South Kanara and Malabar with that in the other districts, it will be found that the rate of assessment in South Kanara and Malabar is higher than that in the other districts. I wanted to know some time back by a question, whether the tenants' improvements in South Kanara and Malabar were taxed. The answer was rather evasive. As it was an unstarred question, I could not elicit further information on the matter. The answer was 'there are different kinds of tenants' improvements, and all those kinds are not taxed.' Some such answer was given. All over the Presidency ryots' meetings have been held and resolutions have been passed and sent to the Government on the difficulty of paying the taxes, but Government seem not to have realized the difficulties of the ryots. My friend Mr. Palat said that remissions have been given on a much larger scale in the Indian States such as Hyderabad, Mysore, etc. That statement was challenged by my friend Sir Parasuram Patro who said that he knew the conditions of those States, that they did not spend much money as this Government on nation-building activities. May I know, if he has seen their budgets, what is the total income there, how much of it is provided for industries and other nation-building departments, and how much remission has been given there? He has not said anything about those things, but has simply said that they have provided very little for nation-building departments and that we here are spending so much more. It is not so, Sir. I find from the budget of those States and from other information available through the papers, that they have spent much more during the past three years on the agricultural and other departments than we have done in this province. Moreover we have large balances also; I do not know why we are accumulating these balances unless it be for helping the ryots in lean years, when they are in distress and difficulties. Simply because reforms are going to come and we are to have a reformed Government, we cannot go on accumulating balances for the future Government if we are ourselves going to be no more, to enjoy that future Government.

"It was asked on the last occasion when this same question was being discussed, by the hon. the Finance Member, whether we ought not to make provision for Part II Schemes for agriculture, industries

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and other departments. I say, we certainly should suspend those activities for some time until we are able to stand upon our legs. Every year you are making some provision from out of the revenue for 'Avoidance of debts,' for 'capital expenditure,' etc. They ought not to be provided for from revenue at all. They should be met from loans. When we cannot even manage to pay our assessment and make both ends meet, how can we provide for 'avoidance of debts' and for capital expenditure from revenue? If the Government are only sympathetic, they will find that the claim for 33 per cent remission is not at all excessive. Let them not think that by giving this remission of 25 per cent which is now asked for in this resolution, they cannot find sufficient money for the nation-building departments; even if it be so, let them suspend activities in those departments. Let them also take something out of the balances which are being kept separately. With these words, Sir, I support this resolution."

MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—"Mr. President, I consider that this subject is far too serious to be made a joke of by any hon. Member. This Council expects from the doyen of this Council much more seriousness at least in considering a matter which affects the very life and the main stay of both the Government and the people of the country. My hon. Friend, Sir Patro, began his speech by deploring the fact that both sides of the House are depleted in strength. Perhaps the reason was the possibility of Sir Patro's speech (laughter). I am glad Members were absent, lest they should also have suffered the same humility and the injury which those of us who were present here had the misfortune to undergo.

"Sir Patro has described his own speech very aptly. He said he was not saying anything either this way or that. That is a very bad description which could not possibly be made by anybody about his own speech. At one time he would say that the Government has to protect the ryot, that every possible facility should be given to the ryot and that this was not the time when the Government should be banking on their rules or regulations. At another time, he would say just the opposite. If any one reads his speech in connexion with the Budget Demand on Land Revenue, one would think that Sir Patro was quite a different incarnation from what he is to-day. To-day he is thoroughly changed. I do not know what that change is due to. Future events, people say, cast their shadows before. (An hon. Member: No motive please.) I am glad to be assured that there is absolutely no motive behind what he has said. But if that assurance had come from the hon. Member from Ganjam instead of from the hon. Member for Cuddapah, it would have been more assuring.

"Sir, I happened to travel a large tract of this Presidency during the last two or three months; and wherever I went, I found that the condition of the agriculturist whether he was a large pattadar or a small pattadar, was simply miserable, and baffled description. I am glad in this connexion to state that the Government are quite alive to the situation, that they recognize that the prices have fallen so low that it is

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impossible for the cultivator or the pattadar to be able to pay his tax properly, and that if the Government had not been able to give him any adequate relief, it was because they had to meet other expenditure. There is no doubt some plausibility in that argument, but the question is: what is the other expenditure that is so paramount and that is so immediately necessary, even in preference to the relief that should be accorded to the pattadar during these times? I for one have no hesitation in saying that it is possible for the Government to retrench their expenditure considerably in order to give the relief that is asked for on the floor of this House and in several of the conferences of landholders held throughout the country. Sir, while admitting that the agriculturist is in a very bad condition, that he requires the support and protection of the Government, to restore the cut from out of the salaries of Provincial Service men seems to be an unpardonable mistake. Sir, that mistake ought to be remedied. I know very well that in recommending that course I am naturally injuring the interests of several Indians who are now in service; but that cannot be helped. And I do not think that any Indian in Madras who is receiving his salary without the cut would like to be in a better position when his neighbour, the agriculturist, is in dire circumstances. I am sure that if the proposition is put to them to-day, they would themselves surrender the cut. I therefore put before the Government this proposal: that if money is quite necessary, it can be found from the restored cut of the Government servants.

"Again, Sir, much is said about the expenditure that is necessary on the nation-building departments which are paraphrased in the language of my friend, Sir Patro, as the Development Department. I should like to have more details about these nation-building departments or the Development Department, whose needs appear to him more urgent than the relief that is absolutely necessary for the agriculturist.

"Sir, all that is possible and that can be spared for these nation-building departments is, I think, by one device or another taken away by the hon. the Finance Member. The Education Department is practically reduced to its former position, probably earlier than 1920 or 1922. By one method or another the hon. the Finance Member was so clever as to induce the Minister to fall in with his proposals, so much so that a good deal of the Education Budget is cut away. Sir, we have two Chancellors of Exchequer for the Madras Province. Sir Thomas Moir had an impregnable exterior, but Sir Hopetoun Stokes has a velvet glove on his iron hand. That is all the difference between these two Chancellors of Exchequer. I do not believe that so much money is necessary even for the purpose of maintaining the essential needs of the nation-building departments. It is all put up for the sake of argument that the nation-building departments will be starved if further relief is given. I beg to submit that, if it comes to that, I would rather prefer the nation-building departments to be starved than to allow the ryots going without any relief whatsoever from the Government.

"Sir, my hon. Friend, Sir Patro, suggested, as if to please the Government, that instead of giving wholesale remission at a certain

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percentage to all pattadars, a graded system might be adopted and particularly suggested the remission of the whole revenue that would be derived from the pattadars who pay an assessment of Rs. 10 and less. While saying this he made it appear to the Council that he himself being a ryot, that he himself having very much to do with the agriculturists, he had a better knowledge of the state of affairs than most of us can possess and I am afraid, Sir, he was speaking entirely without book. I do not know for one reason or another, why this statement showing the extent of holdings according to the assessment, has been omitted in the later reports of the settlement of land revenue. For instance, in 1931-32 we have not got the statement, but in 1930-31 there is. On calculation on the basis of whole remission in the case of all pattadars who pay Rs. 10 and less, the amount comes to 138 lakhs, whereas the Government proposals result only in a remission of 60 lakhs of rupees."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—" May I remind the hon. Member of the time-limit."

MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—" Was that proposition suggested only to defeat the other proposition that nobody should get remission, or was it suggested in favour of the Government, so that they may carry on the administration? Evidently, he has miscalculated the whole thing and thought that by quoting an extreme proposition he would be putting himself right with the poor people and also putting himself right with the Government. Sir, such a dubious position cannot possibly be sustained in a House which has access to facts and figures at a moment's notice. (Sir Patro: 'Pseudo-patriotism'). Sir, I do not know why this question of pseudo-patriotism should come in here. I have not loved England in preference to India and therefore the question of pseudo-patriotism does not arise. He must know the meaning of the words 'patriot and patriotism' before he can hurl that appellation on me. I wonder, Sir, when my hon. Friend is going to learn consistency, when he is going to learn restraint and when he is going to learn dignity in a House of this sort. (Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed: Consistency is not a virtue.)

" Sir, with reference to the remission now suggested by the Government, there is one point to which I would like the Government to pay greater consideration. That is with regard to the difference they make between districts having recent resettlement and those districts which had been settled long ago. The result is that, with regard to resettled areas, the benefit they get is merely a remission of the increased assessment. With regard to the other districts, they get $9\frac{1}{4}$ per cent more. It is desirable that, as the misery, the difficulty and the economic depression is universal, all the districts should be treated alike.

" There is also one more thing which I would like to submit to the Government. They have placed these proposals before the Finance Committee and the Finance Committee, thinking that a constructive proposal might help the Government, recommended a remission of $18\frac{3}{4}$

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per cent for wet lands and 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ for dry lands. Whereas, the Government thought that a uniform 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent remission might be granted. The Government take advantage of the recommendation of the Finance Committee so far as the dry lands are concerned and would not accept the recommendation made so far as the wet lands are concerned. That is really unfair. In fact, the dry lands have never been quite so lucrative as the wet lands and, if remission should be granted, since people have suffered equally from the products of the dry or wet lands, they should not make a small difference between these two things. From this sort of difference it appears to me that the Government are parsimonious in the matter of affording relief in times like this, when I expect the Government to be more generous. The ryots stood by the Government all along. They have been responsible for filling up the coffers of the Government. They have been able not only to feed themselves but also the rest of the population and it is therefore desirable that Government should come to the rescue of the agriculturist in a generous measure, he being the mainstay of the Province. It is not unknown to the Government that other industries—other than agriculture—like steel, piecegoods and such other industries, are able to get protection by means not only of subvention but also through protective duties. Having regard to that, though that matter may not be within the province of the Provincial Government, it is desirable that the Provincial Government should point out the invidious distinction they are making between a commercial industry and an agricultural industry, and try to get some relief, if not by remission, at least by way of subvention to the agriculturists. It is this point of view that I want to urge upon the Government. It should not be supposed that Members of the Legislative Council are irresponsible in asking for such a high percentage of remission. It is not so. We are quite alive to the very depressing condition all round and it is impossible to be more moderate than to ask for a reduction of 25 per cent. If only we should adjust our demands to the needs of the country, to the existing state of affairs, the percentage of reduction that we ask for must certainly be greater. I dare say, so far as the facts and figures are concerned, Government are not willing to dispute them and I do not think they will have the hardihood to dispute them. Their difficulty, as I have said, may be with regard to the adjustment of the budget. Sir, adjustment of the budget may also be accomplished by raising a loan and it is not after all a very humiliating thing for a Government to raise a loan and adjust the budget for some years. We have done so in previous years when the exigencies of the situation required. (The hon. Sir Archibald Campbell: 'When?') Yes, during the war. After all, in the history of Governments, I do not think this is an undesirable course in order to tide over the difficulty. I place this matter before the hon. the Revenue Member, the hon. the Finance Member and other Members of Government, for a sympathetic, generous and broad-minded consideration and not to higggle over facts. It may be, Sir, that some facts may be wrong and some exaggerated, but there is no good of raising any objection on account of that. What we want is this. We want to impress upon you the need for giving a generous

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measure of relief, if you are convinced of the necessity of protecting the agriculturist from utter starvation and ruin and allow him to live, so that he may be able to feed the Government for all time to come."

Mr. C. BASU DEV:—"Mr. President, if I rise to intervene in the debate on this difficult question of remission, it is to express my doubt whether this Council is after all proceeding in the right direction in this matter. This Council has no jurisdiction to tackle questions of exchange and other international issues and perhaps Members of this Council have thought fit to have recourse to the easy though momentary relief by granting remission. I must at the outset make my position clear and assure the agriculturist that I am in entire sympathy with his troubles and his difficulties. The hon. Member who preceded me has told the House how we had come across the indescribable misery of the agriculturist. I too have in my humble way come across the misery of the agriculturist, but in the course of the conversation I had with the agriculturists, I came to understand that what they really want is not the pittance of a remission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent or 25 per cent, but a more substantial and permanent relief and that can only be done by a thorough examination and revision of the system of land revenue in this Province. There is no good in resorting to this slipshod method of asking for remissions year after year and upsetting the administration of the Province. I would therefore respectfully suggest to this House that the better method would be to have a very thorough revision of the land revenue system. A 25 per cent remission which the hon. Members of this House suggest will not help the ryot substantially, nor relieve his distress. If a remission of Rs. 3 for a period of twelve months is given, I am sure it is not going to help him materially. I am not for one moment suggesting that no relief should be given to the agriculturists of this Province. (Mr. Basheer Ahmed: 'Then you want more relief to be given?') Every relief should be afforded to the agriculturist and the method you are suggesting is not the proper method as it would not give him adequate or permanent relief. (Mr. Basheer Ahmed: 'What is your method?') If the hon. Member will have patience to hear me out (Mr. Basheer Ahmed: 'It is impossible')—I am very sorry that even eight or nine years of experience in this Council has not taught him patience. (Mr. Basheer Ahmed: 'It is impossible.') I was suggesting that, instead of distributing a remission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent or 25 or even 50 per cent, if a substantial amount can be wholly set apart for examining the question of affording proper relief in cases of agricultural distress and making a permanent arrangement for meeting contingencies of this sort, the money would have been much better spent. If Government would only set apart the amount of the proposed remission for the purpose of a thorough overhauling of the system and enquiry into the methods by which such distress of the agriculturists could be met, I am sure that would be better and a permanent way of dealing with this question. (Mr. Basheer Ahmed: 'You will vote for this.') I do not know if the Agricultural department or any other department

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concerned with this question has examined how far the supply is in excess of the demand.

"I do not know if the concerned departments have examined the question of finding markets outside this Province for our produce. I do not know, Sir, if any research has been made as to how far other products can be produced in this country other than paddy and how far lands can be set apart for more profitable produce. I am sorry, Sir, I am only a layman in revenue matters. I could only offer what my humble intelligence tells me. I think that, instead of asking for remissions year after year, this House should address itself to solving the problem in a more satisfactory and more permanent way. I am not suggesting that no remissions should be given. I am one of those who suggested in the Finance Committee that a remission of 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent should be given. That would meet to some extent the discontent in some of the recently resettled districts. It is not going to be a substantial relief but it would be equal to the amount of enhanced assessment. With that view I suggested that the remission may be increased to 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. I do agree with Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti when he criticised the nation-building departments. I do not know what those departments are doing to really build up the nation. I join with him in questioning the utility of the work they are doing. The Agricultural department is trying to grow two blades where one grew. That will not solve the question. We must find out where to grow and what to grow. There is no good in simply growing paddy in all areas. With these words, I suggest that, instead of asking for 25 per cent, this House should think of supporting the recommendations of the Finance Committee."

* Sriman M. G. PATNAIK Mahasaya:—"My amendment will be to add the following words: '*Provided that in the assessment in the Goomsur division of the Ganjam district a reduction of 50 per cent be made.*' I have already spoken with regard to this amendment. It was not ready then. My reason is that Goomsur is situated at a great distance from the railway station, and paddy is carried in carts at great cost. Therefore, they have to sell paddy in the division at a low price. Secondly, the neighbouring States of Orissa are dumping large quantities of paddy in Goomsur and the price is thus kept down. These are the reasons I gave and I now formally move the amendment."

* Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. PATRO:—"I have great pleasure in seconding the amendment. It is difficult to commend this motion to those experts in this Council who do not know to distinguish between a rice plant and a chilly plant. If there are members who have come to that state of knowledge and yet can speak with authority on such important matters, then woe for the times and such party. But, we have not descended to that state of self-delusion. Self-discipline is a virtue which ought to be cultivated not only by every individual, but more so by those who are fortunate enough to be responsible Members of this House. When we forget that self-discipline, of course, we lose our position as responsible Members. I need hardly go into that matter at length. We

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have got a very special case in Ganjam. In Goomsur, we have got a very long distance and on account of that, there is extra cost and added to this there are floods or other causes of ruin. It is specially because of this that this amendment is moved and I am sure that it will meet with the approval of the Government. Unlike other districts which are trotted out by hon. Members in the name of patriotism and whose patriotism is so notorious that I need hardly stoop to analyse”

Mr. U. C. SUBRAHMANYA BHATT:—“ May I know, Sir, whether a Member of this House can make an insinuation regarding the patriotism or the bona fides of other Members of this House? ”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“ The hon. Member must have risen up earlier still.”

* Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. PATRO:—“ Thank you, Sir, for giving the apt reply to that very restless Member. However, there it is. With regard to Goomsur, there is a special case for a special treatment. It may not be known to certain people who pose themselves as leaders of people. Though Goomsur is in a corner of the Presidency, surely it is a deserving case and I would appeal to Government to treat this as a special case.”

* Mr. A. B. SHETTY:—“ Mr. President, Sir, Sir Patro has drawn upon himself a shower of criticism from different sides of the House on account of some of the injudicious observations he has made. He must be consoling himself with the thought that hard words break no bones. Sir Patro is not right in thinking that, because some of the Benches in this House were thin when he spoke, the Members of this House are indifferent about this resolution. If there is one matter, Sir, on which all sections of this House are united, it is this question of giving adequate relief to the ryot, at this time of exceptional distress. The cry for relief comes not from one district or one set of people, but from all districts of the Province and from all sections of people from Ganjam down to South Kanara. It is very regrettable that Government have not seen their way to accept in full even the very moderate proposals made by the Finance Committee. The extent of relief decided upon by Government is not at all adequate to meet the needs of the situation at this time of exceptional distress. The position this year is much worse than what it was last year and Government themselves seem to have recognized this matter by coming forward, in however inadequate a manner, to give some relief to the ryots in all districts this year. Even last year, Sir, it was with great difficulty that the ryots paid their assessment. Many had to sell their jewels. Many had to borrow money at high rates of interest and in many cases Government had to take coercive measures and attach and sell lands for arrears of land revenue. Sir, now the prices have gone down by 40 to 50 per cent. The ryots find it very difficult to sell their produce. They cannot get credit. The position is very serious indeed. The Government plead that if they give large remissions, they cannot make sufficient provision for the nation-building departments, for Part II schemes. Government can afford to give

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more relief to the ryots. One way in which Government can find the money for it is by reimposing a cut on the salaries of their servants. The Madras Government were too hasty in restoring the cut imposed year before last. If there is one class of people who are to-day not only not affected by the present economic depression, but are even better off than what they were in previous years, it is the Government officials. Every rupee of the salary they are getting to-day is worth two times as much as what it was half a dozen years ago. So, Government can, without difficulty, reimpose a cut on the salaries of their servants. I do not think Government officials, feeling as they do for their fellow countrymen, will grudge bearing a share of the burden. Secondly, Sir, we found when the last Budget was presented that the Government had a closing balance of 271 lakhs. This accumulated balance can very well be utilized for giving relief to the ryots. Government must give up the policy of meeting capital expenditure out of current revenues and out of balances built up from current revenues. Government must explore all possible ways of giving help to the ryots at a time of distress like this because, as it has been repeatedly said, the agriculturists form not only the bulk of the people of this Province, but they pay the largest part of the Government revenue. Remission in revenue is not the only thing that Government can do to help the ryots. They must take steps to raise the prices of agricultural produce, to provide cheap credit and long-term loans, to help the cultivation of more profitable crops, to find markets for exporting paddy and to prohibit import of rice. Government will be judged by the extent to which they come to the help of the ryot at a time of exceptional crisis like this. The promotion of the welfare of the ryots will be the acid test by which Government will be judged."

* MR. K. KESAVARAMAMURTI NAYUDU :—" Mr. President, Sir, prices have now gone down by more than 55 per cent. Even a remission of 25 per cent will not go a great way in relieving the distress of the ryots. In Godavari, nobody is willing to pay Rs. 2 per bag. Formerly it was selling at Rs. 6. On account of this fall in prices it has been difficult for the poor ryots to meet even the cultivation expenses after paying the Government kist. The present prices are much lower than those obtaining at the time of the previous settlement. The proposed remission of 12½ per cent will not be of any help to them. Even for the cultivation expenses they have mortgaged their lands and parted with the little gold they had. Now is the time for the Government to show real sympathy and come to their rescue by giving at least 25 per cent remission.

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" I wish in this connexion to say a few words about the Polavaram Island. There the protective bund was left incomplete for six or seven miles. Recently there were two very heavy floods and water rose 2 feet above the protective bund and remained there for about 20 days making the crops completely rot. The present rate of assessment on such lands is about Rs. 10-8-0 per acre. The Polavaram project also forms part of the Godavari delta system. The lands in the Godavari delta bring the Government a profit of about 14 per cent over the

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investment. I request the Government to combine these two projects and calculate the expenditure which the Government have incurred. By adding the investment on the Polavaram project to the investment on the Godavari delta system, the Government will find it possible to reduce the present rate of Rs. 10-8-0 assessment to the level of assessment which obtains in other ryotwari parts of the delta. That means they can reduce it to the level of Rs. 6-8-0. I request the hon. the Revenue Member to give a favourable consideration to the grievances of the ryots in the Polavaram Island and give them redress. With these few words I support the motion for reduction."

* Khan Bahadur P. KHALIF-UL-LAH SAHIB Bahadur:—"Mr. President, Sir, coming as I do from Trichinopoly, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not join in this debate and give expression to the prevalent feelings in the districts of Trichinopoly and Madura. Some hon. Members speaking before me said that during their tours in their districts or in other districts they came across ryots who told them that this would be no relief and that they do not want this relief. I am really at a loss to understand such a sort of ryot. At any rate, I may assure this Government that none such exist either in Tanjore, Trichinopoly or Madura, though they may be in existence in the districts which the other Members represent. The feeling is so acute for obvious reasons. A mirasidar friend of mine owning a village in Tanjore tells me that his tenants give him about 400 kalams of paddy which are sold at about 14 annas a kalam and by way of Government kist alone he has to pay about Rs. 360. So that, taking into account all his receipts and disbursements, he stands to lose some money from out of his pocket for the honour of possessing that village. This instance, I may say, is not a rare one. This difficulty is obtaining throughout these districts."

"Sir, is the depression a temporary one? The hon. the Revenue Member told us last year that it may prove to be temporary and the relief granted might be sufficient. Now we see that it is continuing. Last year the position of the ryot was somewhat better for the reason that the prices were a little higher and also for the reason that the ryot had some capital hoarded up in his notorious treasure troughs. The present high value of the gold has dragged out his entire hoarding and the same has been sold out to meet his present demand. This year the position of the ryot in the entire province is certainly more acute than what it was last year. This year they have nothing to fall back upon, his hoarded gold having been previously sold to relieve the pressure brought to bear upon him by the money-lenders and others. His position is now certainly unbearable. Moreover the difficulty of the ryots to-day consists not only in paying off the debts he has incurred, but also in meeting his day-to-day needs."

"Sir, I heard it said by one hon. Member that for a ryot paying about Rs. 100 as tax, Rs. 25 may not be a great relief. But, I may submit, Sir, I am a mirasidar myself and am paying a few hundred rupees by way of tax. This 25 per cent remission will certainly be

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taken as a great relief by me and, I think from the experience that I have got of other mirasidars, and other ryots on a higher and on a lower footing, such a relief would be equally welcome to them.

“ Sir I may say one more word in this connexion. It seems to me that the relief that is given must be an absolute remission and certainly not a suspension of collection merely, because, already the anxiety of the poor ryot is too much for him to bear. There is the money-lender watching him and there are also other things for him to attend to. Let not Government add to the acuteness of his anxiety by adding to it a suspension of tax dangling before him. My humble submission to Government therefore would be that any relief that must be given to the poor ryot must be by way of absolute remission.

“ One hon. Member said that several ryots—though he himself did not believe it—told him that 25 per cent remission would not be a good relief. He closed his speech, however, by saying that he would recommend 18½ per cent relief. I wonder if 18½ per cent remission is in his opinion a substantial relief, whether 25 per cent or more would not be considered by him as a bigger relief. So, taking the entire case, I submit that there is a good case made out for remission and absolute remission being given.

“ One word more, Sir. It has been said that the Government is blind and absolutely heartless in this matter. I have had some discussion, Sir, about this very matter and I must say that the Government is neither blind nor heartless. There is only a difference in view. Government seems to think that remission would not be a proper remedy and that the improvement in nation-building departments would serve as a better remedy. I may say at once that this is not at all a correct view of the present situation. I mean we cannot kill the present ryot and make the position better for the ryot to come. We must see that the ryot that we have is kept in a proper condition before we start making improvements which would be of a permanent nature. The first and foremost requirement to-day is the immediate relief to the ryot actually suffering and such immediate relief can be given only if we grant remission and certainly not by improving the nation-building departments which may in the long run prove advantageous. I therefore think that immediate relief should have preference.”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“ Mr. Basheer Ahmed may move his amendment and at the same time confine his remarks to the amendment.”

MR. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—“ I rise to move the amendment of which I have given notice, namely—

‘ that between the words “ on ” and “ ryotwari ” insert the word “ all ” and, secondly, after the word “ lands ” insert the words “ irrespective of wet or dry ”.’

“ Sir, the reason why I have thought it fit to give notice of this amendment is this: In the recent communiqué which the Government issued they have shown a differential treatment between wet

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and dry lands. But, I am afraid, in the communiqué itself they have made out no case against a lower percentage of remission or suspension in the case of dry lands. The prices of crops have admittedly fallen. It cannot be said that they have fallen only in the case of wet crop, viz., paddy and not in the case of dry crops such as ragi, cholam or cumbu and such other products. In fact the prices of dry crops have always kept a certain ratio with those of crops like paddy. Whenever the price of paddy comes down, naturally the demand for this dry crop also comes down and there is an equal degree of fall in the price of dry crops as well. I therefore say, Sir, that the Government is not justified in proposing to suspend only $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in the case of wet crops coming under the area settled after 1918-19 and only $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent in the case of dry crops. Sir, there are dry lands which are cultivated with wet crops by Government water. In the case of those lands which are cultivated with wet crop by Government water, I have already moved and the amendment is before the House that the water-rate should also be included for purposes of remission or suspension. I believe, Sir, that the Government have done well in having included water-rate as well, but I would urge upon them the necessity and the justice of giving the same rate of suspension or remission in the case of dry lands as well. All that the Government have stated in their communiqué with regard to dry crops is this:

‘The prices of dry food grains rose similarly, but have not fallen so low.’

“This is a comment which does not comprehend any logic in it. If they have risen along with the wet crops, naturally they must have fallen also in the same ratio as the wet crops. The Government have, however, merely left the matter there and say that they have not fallen so low. All the same there is this admission that the prices of dry crops have fallen. But I submit that the Government have not investigated the extent to which the prices of dry crops have fallen. That being the case, in the absence of any investigation and without having made out a case against giving a similar suspension in the case of dry crops, it is but fair and reasonable that they should also include the dry crops for remission or suspension, whatever that might be.

“Sir, I would now pass on to the amendment that has been given notice of by my hon. Friend from Ganjam and which has been supported so vehemently by the other Friend from Ganjam. I submit that it is not merely Gumsur alone that is situated in a peculiar position. I have brought to the notice of the hon. the Revenue Member the case of those districts that have been very severely affected by the last cyclone—I mean the sad plight of South Arcot and Tanjore. Gumsur is not the only part of the district that has suffered seriously. In the case of certain important taluks in South Arcot and a major portion of Tanjore the condition is still more deplorable. In their cases, if Government merely state that Board’s Standing Orders will be given effect to and that the usual remissions will be given to them, it

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will not be a sufficient or adequate relief. Government have promised at the end of their communiqué that such remissions as may be admissible under the Board's Standing Orders or any other special orders may be passed by the Government. Collections have already commenced and I ask the hon. the Revenue Member as to what special orders the Government have passed or are going to pass. Under the present circumstances almost all crops have failed in the taluks of Chidambaram and Vriddhachalam. It has also been brought to the notice of the Government that Vriddhachalam has been affected by a new pest as well. So, this must receive a greater consideration at the hands of the Government than places like Gumsur. I would ask the hon. the Revenue Member and the Minister in charge to look into this fact and see how this pest has come in that taluk and what steps they have taken to prevent the spread of pest in other neighbouring taluks. I am afraid, if proper remedies are not taken, the pest will spread in the neighbouring taluks and Government will be placed in a worse position than they are at present. As it is, in the Press Communiqué the Government have stated that some concessions have been given to the ryots. I do not see exactly what concessions they have given. They say they have so many proposals under consideration and effect will be given to them in due course. I want to bring to the notice of the hon. the Revenue Member that the several concessions they claim to have given to the ryots have not been given to the ryots in Tanjore and South Arcot by the authorities subordinate to the Government. The Deputy Collectors and the Tahsildars do not allow any concessions allowed by the Government to be enjoyed by the ryots. The latter are not even allowed to take even fallen trees in order to rebuild their houses. I therefore request the hon. the Revenue Member to direct the Deputy Collectors and the Tahsildars to give the ryots such relief as is possible which would not entail any loss to the Government. Even such kind of relief is denied to the ryots of South Arcot. Some poor people have been prosecuted because they took one or two fallen trees to rebuild their houses. In South Arcot prosecutions were launched upon some poor persons for removing small things. I would therefore appeal to the hon. the Revenue Member that there is a case for special treatment being meted out in the case of cyclone affected areas in South Arcot and Tanjore and would ask him to pass early orders giving those ryots some special treatment or extra remission. It will not be enough, if the Government confine themselves merely to Board's Standing Orders. The Board's Standing Orders themselves require revision and it would be desirable if Government would take up revision of those orders as soon as possible, because, as has been pointed out by the ryots of South Arcot and Tanjore, the old system of settlement is not really the right kind of settlement. I do not want to go into that question in detail now. The communiqué has not taken into consideration this aspect of the question. Cultivation to-day calculated even according to Mr. Jackson's report is not profitable. Government's claim of 50 per cent is nearly 115 or 110 or 90 per cent. Statements showing these facts

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have been asked and furnished by the mirasidars of Chidambaram taluk to the hon. the Revenue Member and the hon. the Finance Member in statements 'A,' 'B' and 'C.' They have shown from the settlement report of Mr. Jackson that the several tarams into which he has classified land do not yield so much profit to ryots. The Government themselves have not examined those statements in their Press Communiqué and have not made any mention of the profitable nature of cultivation. It must be taken for granted in the absence of any contradiction by the hon. the Revenue Member that every taram rate particularly in the lower Coleroon anicut is a rate not warranted by figures and even according to Mr. Jackson's calculation the ryots are working at a minus balance and none of them are making any profit. This, the Press Communiqué has not referred to and it would have been beneficial if Government had included an examination of this aspect of the question as well. I hope the Government will accept or are going to accept 25 per cent or 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent remission and include dry assessment also for remission.

"I may, before I conclude, mention that all over the districts there has been a demand for more than 50 per cent reduction. Obviously that seems to be a very reasonable request. The position of the ryots is worse than it was at any other time. Unless 50 per cent reduction is given to them, there will be no real relief to them. But I am not going to press that point. There are so many things in the Press Communiqué which the Government will do well to examine and in the case of Tanjore and South Arcot, I hope they will be pleased to issue special orders giving them a special remission. I therefore move my amendment."

The PATTAGAR OF PALAYAKOTTAI spoke in Tamil seconding the motion.

* Mr. W. K. M. LANGLEY:—"I had no intention of intervening in this debate, but on reconsideration I thought, there might be some misunderstanding if I did not take part, in view of the fact that I took some part in a similar discussion during last year's budget, and that some explanation might be called for if I did not take part in this particular debate. I am afraid, as far as I am concerned, I cannot accept Mr. Arasu's proposal which recommends a reduction of 25 per cent all round. I cannot support a resolution of that nature. While I am afraid I cannot support such a proposition I ought also to make it plain that I do not speak on behalf of the Group with which I am connected but am speaking for myself. So, it should not be understood that the Group with which I am connected supports a general reduction of 25 per cent in the land revenue assessment. On the other hand I should certainly not like to go so far as Sir A. P. Patro to whom I listened with absolute amazement when he was speaking on this resolution. He appeared to be opposed to this resolution, yet he actually suggested, I believe—Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti has already dealt with it—that land assessment in the case of those who are paying Rs. 10

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and less should be remitted entirely. I understand that those who pay Rs. 10 and less represented 70 per cent of the ryotwari landholders of the Madras Presidency. So, while I cannot support Mr. Arasu in the matter of reduction of 25 per cent all round, I am afraid it would be still more impossible for me to support Sir Patro's proposal that there should be a general reduction of 70 per cent, a proposition which seems to me to be absolutely barren of statesmanship.

“ Nevertheless, I do feel, and coming from Malabar I could not possibly help feeling, that some measure of relief is called for and to that extent I must express my gratitude for the proposals of Government for the reductions that they have suggested. But I confess that as far as Malabar is concerned—I admit that it is the only district of which I have personal experience—it struck me when the proposals came out that the reductions proposed were extremely meagre. I think last year Malabar was given a reduction of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on most of its lands. Everybody will tell you in Malabar, and I challenge the Government to ask their own officers—that the condition of Malabar and the condition of prices in Malabar is infinitely worse now than it was a year ago. If it was justifiable to reduce the assessment in Malabar by $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent last year, well, I think some larger remission is justifiable on the present occasion. And when I refer to Malabar, I think I can equally speak for South Kanara which is faced with very much the same problems with which Malabar is faced. I expect that most people who have read the papers will recollect an important speech made by H. H. the Zamorin in Calicut itself, in which he stated that he was only able to meet the last assessment through the fortunate fact that he received the Government malikhana just at the same time and was able to meet it out of that. Those who are not so fortunate as to receive malikhana from the Government—you can imagine their condition. It is undoubtedly the fact that the great landholders of Malabar are borrowing money in order to pay their assessment. They deserve every possible consideration at the hands of Government. It is all very well to speak of lands held by investors and not by poor ryots. The land is held in Malabar by the big janmis who have all the responsibilities and none of the advantages of the big zamindars of the East Coast. Where their own tenants cannot meet the assessment, it is notorious that the janmis have to do so on their behalf.

“ My Friend, Mr. Patnaik, has already, I believe, moved an amendment relating to his district or one division of his district. (Interruption.) That is what I am doing. I am not far wrong. If that particular district is impoverished, all I can say in that respect is, if wealth has not accumulated in Goomsur, man has certainly not decayed in a district which has produced two such prominent Members of this House as Sir A. P. Patro and Mr. Patnaik, but if the district is in need of special consideration at the hands of Government, I claim that, if there is any special consideration to be shown to any district, it is only justifiable that it should be shown to my own district of Malabar and its allied district of South Kanara.

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"As I have remarked, I am afraid I cannot support the particular resolution before the House. But I would have been glad if the Government had accepted the recommendations of the Finance Committee. On that basis, I think I could have justifiably taken part in any division which might arise. As it is, I am afraid I cannot vote one way or the other.

"As regards the special Government communiqué which was issued some time ago and to which our attention has been forcibly drawn by Government and by most of those who have spoken during this debate, I have read it, I hope, with sufficient care and I have read it several times over. It seems to me that the thing which mainly emerges from this communiqué is that it suggests that the ryotwari system in this Presidency has entirely broken down. I know that the gentleman, under whose signature this communiqué was issued and who made that brilliant speech on behalf of the Government during the last budget session, referred with the deepest respect to Sir Thomas Munroe and others who gave us the ryotwari system. It seems to me that the system, say what you like, is a species of socialism. It is an arrangement by which the Government, after certain deductions took nearly 50 per cent of the yield of the land. That was based on theories which obtained and which were workable 100 years ago when produce was as good as money and in fact, in most parts of the country at any rate, passed as money. The Government, it seems to me, are now in the same position as the United States of America in respect of most of their creditors. They ask their creditors to pay them in a commodity which they simply cannot produce. Their creditors are prepared to give them either goods or services, but they cannot give them what they do not possess, which is gold. In the same way, the Government, under the ryotwari system and the way it is worked to-day, cannot accept their share of the produce in the produce itself. They call upon those who produce the produce to pay their share in something which to the producer, it is not exaggeration to say, is simply unobtainable. It is all very well to refer to the market prices of the produce and so on, but it must be remembered that these prices just like the prices of stocks and shares are the quoted prices so long as the market is not flooded. Now it is notorious that the godowns and warehouses on the East Coast as well as the kalams in Malabar are bulging with paddy at the present moment, which is simply unsaleable. It is all very well to say that paddy sells at so much per garce or so much per para or so much per any other measure you like. It is only worth that so long as there is somebody to buy it at that price. If all the paddy is put on the market simultaneously, it will simply mean that the price will not be so much per para or so much per garce, it would be nil, it would have no value whatsoever. It seems to me that we are facing what may turn into a very serious situation in this Presidency in the matter of this unsaleable produce on which the Government build their hopes for realizing their land revenue. Surely the Government may be faced with a similar situation to what obtains in many of the wheat

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countries where wheat is being burnt in incinerators in large quantities, because there is a large surplus which has no value whatsoever. Similarly in Brazil where the staple produce is coffee,—my hon. Friends from South Kanara will tell you—it is being burnt at the rate of 10 to 15 million bags per annum. You should look at what is happening in other countries. You may be faced with a similar situation in this Presidency where paddy accumulates to such an extent that it might reach a stage of being definitely unsaleable and large portions of it might have to be taken off the market and destroyed. In that event, any sort of remission that the Government might give would be absolutely valueless. The Government should very seriously and very carefully consider the suggestion that was made on the other side of the House by Mr. Basu Dev who made a most valuable contribution to the debate to-day. I think he suggested that a most careful examination should be made not only of the ryotwari system but also of the whole agricultural system of the Presidency.

“ Now, in this communiqué there is a paragraph which interests me particularly. I confess that some of the earlier paragraphs do not explain very much to a layman like myself, but there is one particular paragraph on which, I think, I do know something and that is the paragraph on page 4 which mentions the measures which Government are proposing to take in order to try and alleviate the situation. Well, I have no hesitation in stating that these particular measures that they propose are almost entirely valueless. It is true that railway rates have to some extent been reduced and to that extent, possibly, some of the mirasidars of Tanjore may be getting a slightly better market for their rice down in Ceylon. The only other suggestion is looking for fresh markets. How can the Government of Madras expect to find new markets for a produce like paddy when the whole of the paddy growing countries of the world, where marketing of paddy is a fine art, cannot find an outlet for it? Let them look at the state of Burma. If there were new markets for paddy, would Burma and Siam not have found them quickly? As it is, the state of Burma as a paddy-growing country is far worse than the state of India. And if the Government of Madras seriously think that they are going to be able to find a new market for their paddy, then, I am afraid they are suffering under a deplorable delusion. Nevertheless . . . (Interruption.) That is what I am coming to—other crops. I am glad to see that I have stung Sir A. P. Patro into a valuable suggestion. That was the suggestion: other crops which might be grown in the place of paddy. I met a friend this morning who is very much interested in agriculture. He deals in an article which is enormously used in this Presidency and all over the world—fertilizers. He was telling me about some striking work which he had inspected only yesterday. It was being carried out by a man who happened to find himself by various accidents in possession of a considerable quantity of land which hitherto had been used only for paddy. He knew that it was no use growing paddy on that particular land; he immediately decided to grow sugarcane on

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that land. He was doing that with very striking results and very considerable profit to himself. I put it to this gentleman: when so much of the land now on paddy can be cultivated with sugarcane, why do not the ryots do that? His reply was that the ryots were extremely conservative people, their family system was such that if a bright son proposed the turning of paddy land into sugarcane land, he would be told that what was good enough for his father and grandfather was good enough for him also. The ryots feel a hesitation in altering the ancient system of the family, the principal reason being they have no confidence, feel no certainty as to the future prices for sugarcane. That is hardly surprising, because the price of sugarcane is artificially kept up by the enormous protective tariff on sugar and they feel that these enormous duties might be removed at any moment and the price of sugarcane might slump. The conservative father to whom I have referred would then tell his son, 'well, I told you so.' That is their fear. It seems to me that a great deal might be done by the Agricultural Department to encourage and persuade the ryots to cultivate other crops rather than paddy.

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"Obviously the crop which must strike everybody as being the crop which should be immediately grown, as soon as possible in large quantities, is sugarcane. But the question is whether the Government would definitely arrive at some figure and guarantee the buying rate at a certain figure for a ryot's sugarcane. I do not know if some such guarantee can be given. It seems to me that many thousands of acres in this Presidency, which now are only producing paddy and are not in a position to pay their assessment, can grow very valuable crops like sugarcane, which would enable them to pay their full assessment and the ryots would thus be in a better position to meet the demands of Government from a reliable source of income."

* DR. P. SUBBARAYAN:—"Sir, this is not the first time that Mr. Langley has impressed the House with his lucid and cogent arguments, because whenever he intervenes in debate, he is always able to contribute something to the knowledge of hon. Members of this House. The remedy that he has suggested of growing sugarcane in paddy lands is indeed one that ought to be investigated and his suggestion to have most of the paddy lands converted into lands growing sugarcane deserves every consideration. As has been pointed out by himself, in a place like the United States they have arrived at a situation when they had to give up growing wheat when there was no market to be found for this commodity. We are slowly coming to a situation like that even in this Province. As he pointed out, you may very well say that you have got so much paddy in your hands and so you ought to be able to pay the kist the Government demand. But as he lucidly explained, it is not possible for the ryot to sell that commodity, and the Government want their revenue in money. If the poor agriculturist has to pay revenue, he must naturally borrow by mortgaging his land which now has become less valuable than it was in the old

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days, or by pledging his jewels. My hon. Friend, Mr. Khalif-ul-lah Sahib, pointed that, owing to the rise in the price of gold, that commodity has already gone out of the country—because of the high price that has obtained for gold during the last three or four years. So, here again you have a situation in which the ryot is not in a position even to raise money on credit to pay his kist to the Government. I am thankful to the Government, as other hon. Members of this House were, for the remission that they have granted by the communiqué which they have recently issued. The only point we make is that the remission does not go far enough to alleviate the plight of the agriculturist as it stands to-day. I was rather surprised when, in spite of the arguments Mr. Langley adduced for the remission, he said that he was not in a position to go as far as Mr. Arasu's resolution for remission of 25 per cent. All his arguments on the other hand were really for not only 25 per cent but even more; because he gave other instances to prove that the plight of the agriculturist was such that he was not able to meet the demand of the Government. But he ended by saying that he is not going to vote one way or the other, because he felt that the demand made by Mr. Arasu's resolution went further than he expected.

“I do not know the reasons which made the Government not to accept the proposals of the Finance Committee. I believe that, when they went before the Finance Committee, they were willing to give reduction by $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on dry lands in the areas that were settled after 1919 and the same rate was to be applied with regard to wet lands. The Finance Committee felt that this did not go far enough as far as wet lands were concerned and therefore they reduced even the Government proposal of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for dry lands in the recently settled districts to $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent and suggested that $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent might be given to wet lands in recently settled districts. The Government on the one hand accepted the proposal of the Finance Committee because they found that this will save them a certain amount of money by reducing the suspension of dry rate from $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. After accepting this proposal of the Finance Committee they rejected the further proposal of the Finance Committee which, I believe, was dependent on this. As Mr. Langley pointed out, the owners of wet lands were suffering more than the owners of dry lands in spite of the argument adduced by my hon. Friend, Mr. Basheer Ahmed. There is no doubt that all prices have gone down. The fall in price of wet crops is much more than that of dry crops. My hon. Friend, Mr. Basheer Ahmed, forgets that the assessment which the owner of a wet land has to pay is comparatively more than that which the owner of a dry land has to pay. Therefore, the former deserves a little more reduction than the owner of a dry land. That is the reason why the Members of the Finance Committee came to the conclusion that $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent reduction should be given on such lands. I was told on good authority that the remission which is granted now amounts to Rs. 60 lakhs for the fasli year, that is the year beginning from July to the end of June, and that if the $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent reduction were accepted, it would be about Rs. 72 lakhs. As my hon. Friend, Mr. Shetti, pointed out, there is a balance

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with the Government of Madras of over Rs. 2 crores. The Government replied that there would be demands every year and, if those demands were granted, the balance will not be sufficient to meet the demands of the Legislative Council year after year.

“ At the same time it was also mentioned that, if such remissions are given, it would be impossible to carry on the activities of what they call the nation-building departments. But my answer to this is this. Whatever may be the desire of the people to advance in the matter of education, sanitation, medical relief and industrial pursuits, people have got to live before they can think of these necessary, but not essential, pursuits. Because, when famine faces them and when it is impossible for them to meet even their daily wants, their thoughts of education and sanitation can really not bother them very much. If it is not possible for the Government to collect revenue to the extent that they will be able to carry on the activities of these departments, they must naturally apply the pruning knife to these departments. I think it was one hon. Member—I forget his name for the time being—who said that in spite of the existence of the Agricultural Department and the existence of the hon. the Minister for Development for the last 13 years, the Development Department has developed perhaps in expenditure but has not really developed the activities of the people at all. The hon. Minister who is sitting on that Bench himself pleads guilty to that charge for the simple reason that, even though the researches carried on by the Agricultural Department may be such as to produce two blades of grass where one blade grew, the ryot, as Mr. Langley pointed out, will allow his land, owing to his conservatism, to yield only one blade of grass or even half a blade of grass as he is supposed to do because of the economic situation. Therefore, if that is the experience of the existence of these Development Departments, I would suggest that, if the Government find it difficult to meet the expenditure for these Development Departments, they might stop those activities for the time being. The hon. Minister says ‘abolish.’ He not only agrees with my suggestion but, after the experience of these years, he has come to the definite conclusion that abolition might be the solution of the problem. (Interruption by the hon. Mr. P. T. Rajan.) The hon. Minister has evidently changed his view. Therefore the situation is one that really demands a radical remedy and that radical remedy can only be found by the Government sympathetically considering the demand of the ryots; because, if the ryot is not prosperous, the Government cannot eventually collect the revenue. As Mr. Langley rightly pointed out, if he has no money to pay, if he has no credit that he can get from outside, it will be impossible for the Government even to collect revenue, whatever may be the process they may adopt, because this is an economic proposition. Unless a person is in a position to pay, whatever may be the law and the procedure, you cannot collect money if it does not exist. There will come a time when the ryot will be in such a position that he will not be able to pay the kist whatever may be the situation. Therefore it is but right that the Government, who, I know, have the interests of the people at heart as much as we on this side of the House, should

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come to the rescue of the ryot and view this whole question in a large-hearted manner than a private landholder who is always looking for the money he can get, because he is living on that money, and act as the father of the people whose interests they have at heart and think that in the prosperity of the people lies their own prosperity. Therefore, I am sure that the Government would realize the present economic situation and the dreadful condition of the agriculturist and would see their way to accept the resolution of this House at least to the extent of the recommendation of the Finance Committee which, I hope, they will deeply consider and ponder over before the budget is introduced in this House."

* Mr. DANIEL THOMAS :—" Mr. President, Sir, after the speeches of the last two hon. Members, Mr. Langley and Dr. Subbarayan, there is really nothing left for me to say. I would make only one suggestion. In the course of the discussion of the issue now before the House various suggestions of far-reaching character have been made. The suggestion made by Mr. Langley and the suggestions made by my hon. Friends, Mr. Basu Dev and Sir Patro, will have to be considered in the years to come. Many far-seeing and statesmanlike suggestions for the improvement of the condition of the agriculturist in this Province will have certainly to be put forward for the proper consideration of the authorities. With regard to the remarks made by Sir Patro, I have one suggestion to make and that is, I do not think that Sir Patro meant that the figure of Rs. 10 pattadar should be a fixed figure. I take it the suggestion he wanted to make to the Government is that in any scheme that may be formulated for the ultimate benefit of the ryots of this country, allowance will have to be made for such ryots as are having income below a certain quota. So far as the income derived from commerce or by following the various professions is concerned, incomes below a certain figure are exempt from taxation. I believe that in the years to come, when the land revenue policy will be placed on a statutory basis, some allowance will have to be made for the peasant proprietors or cultivators whose income fall below a certain figure. It may be that in the years to come our land revenue system may have to be recast or revolutionized on the basis that all incomes of cultivators won't be taxable and that incomes of proprietors and landowners below a certain figure would be exempted from taxation. With reference to the suggestion thrown out by Mr. Basu Dev as regards the solution of the problem of the agriculturists of this Province by finding the necessary marketing facilities for them, that is a question which I believe, will receive the serious attention of the Government and of the public in the years to come. They are all, however, questions of a far-reaching character which are not going to take any shape in the near future. The immediate problem before us, that faces the ryot to-day, is not any of these large questions, but the question as to how he is going to pay the tax for the current fasli, which comes off in March and April. I think all questions of a far-reaching character such as the recasting of the land revenue system or the improvement of the Development departments of Government, etc., or the placing of agriculture on a better basis in this province—all these questions are not going to be taken up now. My

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hon. Friend Mr. Langley, as my Friend Dr. Subbarayan pointed out, has painted in very realistic colours the desperate condition of the ryot and also added that he was not in a position to vote for the 25 per cent reduction which is asked for in this resolution. At the same time, he pleaded that for Malabar and South Kanara special considerations should be shown. We have some time back had an amendment by my Friend Mr. Patnaik, who stated that for the Goomsur division in Ganjam district, a special reduction of 50 per cent should be made. I believe that every Member of this House who represents any area will be able to convince this House that his particular area deserves special treatment. The ultimate result of every Member claiming a reduction of 50 per cent for his district will be that a uniform rate of 50 per cent remission should be allowed to all the districts of the Province. But all of us do not want to go so far; in regard to my own district of Tinnevely, I can make the same claim and I can prove it by facts and figures. I received only the other day some facts and figures from a highly placed retired Government servant. He said he owned $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of wet land in Kallidaikurichi of the Ambasamudram taluk of Tinnevely, one of the most fertile areas in the Tambraparni Irrigation System in our district. He said that the kist for that area of $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres was Rs. 29 and odd. My Friend from South Kanara claimed that his district was the heaviest taxed district in the province. I think I can claim that Tinnevely is the heaviest taxed district. That gentleman, as I said, was paying a kist of Rs. 29 and odd. The year before last he had an income from that land of about Rs. 39, and that was the net income. So, out of it he paid Rs. 29 towards kist and profited to the extent of Rs. 10. That was the position year before last; but in the current year, the total income that he derived from his land was only Rs. 19 and odd and he told me—he is a pensioner of the Madras Government drawing a fairly large amount as pension—that out of the pension that he received, he made good the deficit of Rs. 10 and paid the kist for the land. That may very well be nothing for a Government servant drawing a large pension, but what about the ordinary ryot, I ask? The ordinary ryot who has no pension or any other resources to fall back upon, whose condition was so aptly described by my Friend, Mr. Langley, what is he to do? Where is he to get the money from for paying the Government kist? I am only reminded of that old story which I read in my school days, about half the profits. A man carried a large fish into a palace with a view to get presents, but the gate-keeper claimed half the profits. The man consented and when he was asked what he wanted, he said he wanted 100 lashes, so that half of them may go to the gate-keeper. Similarly here, if the Government claim 50 per cent of the profits and if the ryot has no profits at all but is faced with a deficit, will the Government share with the ryot one-half of his deficit? That is the logical way in which the question should be solved now. I do not however want to stand on mere logic; I believe the Government are fully appraised of the situation of the ryots in all parts of the Province. I believe, as my Friend, Dr. Subbarayan, said, the Government are not less backward than any of us in this House in considering the actual relief and measures of amelioration necessary for the ryot. I take it that both the Government

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and we are agreed that the ryot does stand in need of relief to the extent not only of 25 per cent, but more. We ask for only 25 per cent, because we claim that that is a reasonable claim which the Government, by adjusting its finances, would be able to meet in the present circumstances. The Government agree that the ryot does stand in need of 25 per cent relief. The only difference between us is whether the 25 per cent reduction, which will probably result in Rs. $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores of revenue remission, can be made good from other sources. On that matter, my Friend, Mr. Shetty, has very well pointed out that there are various sources from which this amount can be met. It could be met from three sources, from the opening balances, through observing economy in Part II Schemes, and by having a graded cut in the salaries of Government officials. My Friend, Mr. Shetty, also referred to this aspect of the question, in some detail. If you take the salaries of public servants of the Province as they stand to-day and as they stood before the year 1914, I believe the present figures come to something like double the figures for 1914. If you again take the position of a Government servant before 1914 drawing a certain salary, and if you take a man who was making out his livelihood by other professions such as commerce, agriculture or industries and if you take the same people now, you will see that a vast change has taken place in their respective positions to-day. The Government servant drawing Rs. 100 or Rs. 200 in 1914 is at the present day enjoying practically twice the advantages that he enjoyed in 1914; whereas the agriculturist or the industrialist or the trader or other professional man who was getting Rs. 100 or Rs. 200 in 1914 is hardly able to make both ends meet, and his income is hardly one-half, as compared to 1914. I believe this is a reasonable statement. Some of my Friends say that the Government servants will themselves be coming forward to accept this cut, as a self-denying ordinance. But human nature is not after all so generous in a matter affecting financial matters. I would say it is not unreasonable to expect that when the whole province is so hard hit, when every section of the population, agriculturist, industrialist, professional men, etc., is suffering badly, the public servant also should come in for his share and should be made to contribute his quota towards restoring a better financial equilibrium in our Province.

"Then, Sir, I have only one other suggestion to make to the hon. the Revenue Member. In the matter of concessions which have been allowed by the Government thus far, a distinction is sought to be made between certain districts which were recently resettled and certain others which were settled earlier. I think the figures on which such distinctions are made are not quite accurate. Whatever may have been the difference in prices between the times of the first and the next settlements, no increase has been made anywhere, of over $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent is the maximum rate of increase in any district. In Tinnevely the settlement was made in 1910 or so, and an increase of $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent was made; in Tanjore which was settled some years ago, the increase was the same $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. So, I say, whatever was the difference in prices between one settlement and another, the maximum increase is only $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.

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So far as the actual rate of increase for Tinnevely or Tanjore is concerned, the rate is the same. Similarly in the case of other districts, and nowhere has the maximum increase been more than 18½ per cent. This fact will have to be taken into consideration in regard to the other districts which claim a similar concession now. I would submit that taking the conditions as they are at present, there is practically no difference between district and district in the matter of the distress suffered; the ryots in all the districts are very badly off. I would submit that the wise policy and the large-hearted policy of the Government should be to make no distinction between one district and another and to see that this concession is made available equally to all the districts."

* Mr. K. KOTI REDDI:—"Mr. President, Sir, if I rise now to support this motion, it is not because I think I can augment the arguments and the information that have already been brought to bear in support of this resolution, but because I think Government have not really realized the situation of the ryot in this Presidency and therefore it is the bounden duty of each one of us here to express what he feels about the resolution and to bring to the notice of the Government, if they can be convinced, the dire consequences that would follow as a result of the Government not accepting this resolution, this modest proposal of 25 per cent remission, as I should put it, in the present circumstances. Before going into the question in detail, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government one or two facts within my own knowledge. There have been many Members here who have already spoken and who gave information to the Government, not from direct knowledge but from information derived from the ryots. I claim, Sir, to be an actual cultivating ryot and I can give information to the Government with regard to the profits that are made out of cultivation, information which I have in my possession, accompanied by facts and figures. If the Government care to go into those facts and figures and the accounts that I am keeping, they will know what a landowner is making as profits out of his land. Sir, it is said that the position of the dry land is a little better than the position of the wet land. I am acquainted with both kinds of lands; but I believe the position of the dry land is not in any way better than that of the wet land. Both of them stand on the same footing of a profitless concern.

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"Sir, I have got an account of the money that I have got out of the cultivation of my lands covering about 200 acres of dry land for the last four years. I have not brought them here, but if Government cares I shall send for them and let them go through them and find out what is it that I have realized from the cultivation of those lands. The amount that I have made, I may say, is a very big zero even without paying anything to the manager who is looking after the cultivation. That is the state of affairs that actually exists in this Presidency at the present moment. Government may easily say that the position is not so bad as that. It is notorious that the ryot is so fond of his land that he is even prepared to sell away whatever he has for meeting Government revenue. As a matter of fact, for the last three or four years, in order to raise the amount necessary for paying the revenue due to Government, and for

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meeting other necessary expenditure, the ryots have sold away almost all their jewels. On another occasion last year I have pointed out the desirability of investigating how much gold has been sold away by the ryots in order to pay the revenue and how much of their jewels have been pledged with money-lenders including the Imperial Bank for this purpose. Government do not seem to have cared to investigate. Only recently the Government of India has come forward and appointed some experts from England to investigate into the question and to make an economic survey of this big country including, I believe, the Madras Presidency. What the result of that investigation will be, I do not know. But I can say only this, that though the Government may wait for the result of that investigation the ryot cannot. The point that we have to immediately consider is how the ryot is going to meet Government revenue. He has sold away his jewels already. If he is able to raise a loan, he is certainly prepared to do so and pay the revenue, but it is a well-known fact that in many districts—at least so far as the district with which I am acquainted is concerned—the ryot has no credit. No money-lender is prepared to lend him money even though the ryot is prepared to take it at an exorbitant rate of interest, unless jewels are pledged with him, which the ryot has not got, for he has sold away whatever he had last year. That is his position.

“Now, let us consider the prices that are ruling at present. I have some knowledge of the actual prices of some of the produce from lands. In regard to groundnut, it is rather unfortunate that Government do not seem to keep an account of prices of groundnut, for I do not find in any report any information about the prices of groundnut in various districts. For this one has only to rely on the information given in newspapers. In the years 1916, 1917 and 1918, the price of groundnut per maund was about Rs. 1-6-0, but subsequent to that prices rose. I remember I actually sold in one year at Rs. 3 per maund. In many years it was more than Rs. 2 varying between Rs. 2 and Rs. 2-8-0 and it would certainly be much more in places which are very near the markets. I am speaking of a place which is 26 miles from the nearest railway station. Now, what is the price? Last year at about November or December it began with 11 annas and never rose beyond 13 annas. The year before last, it was much better, it began with 12 annas and went up to Rs. 1-8-0, and there was a sudden rise of prices—I do not know the reason, probably it was due to the shortage of production. But this year, the price began with 5 annas to 6 annas per maund fresh from ground and after some time it went up to 8 annas or 9 annas and now the price is 10 annas. One has only to compare 8 annas or 9 annas with Rs. 2 or Rs. 2-8-0. In this connection, we have to take into account the price of seed and the cost of harvesting which alone would even now be at least 5 annas to 6 annas per maund and various other expenses. I leave it to Government to think what will be the consequences of a state of things like this.

“So far with regard to groundnut which has been the chief commercial crop in both the black cotton and red soil tracts. For the last ten years, groundnut has practically taken the place of cotton as the first

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commercial crop. Then, with regard to cotton itself, the position is not in any way much better. Though I am not so much acquainted with the prices of cotton, yet I have some knowledge of this also. In 1918 and subsequent years the price was about Rs. 250 or Rs. 300 and it went up even to Rs. 500 per kanttam, but anyway the average price of cotton was not less than Rs. 200, but last year and one or two years previous the price never went beyond Rs. 80 and it is the same to-day, I believe. No doubt as a result of the Japanese agreement, the price has gone up a bit but has not materially increased.

"Then, with regard to cholam, the position is much the same. In this case also, in the year 1918, the price of one putti, i.e., 640 Madras measures, was about Rs. 140, and for some years after at any rate it did not go below Rs. 120. For the last two years, the price is only Rs. 40 and to-day I am told it is somewhere about Rs. 33. That is the state of affairs to-day."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The hon. Member has already exceeded the time-limit."

* Mr. K. KOTI REDDI:—"With regard to the interesting question that has been raised as to the reform that would probably be necessary with regard to the land revenue settlement, I am also very much interested, but I believe the time at my disposal is short to deal with it now, and I do not therefore propose to discuss the question. Whatever it may be, we are now bringing to the notice of the Government the extraordinary position which the ryot now occupies. He has practically no resource for him to pay the land revenue, and unless the Government comes to his rescue, one cannot realize what his position will be in the future. Probably Government will have to take up all the land which they have been claiming as theirs. The position of the agricultural labourer to-day is much better than that of a ryot, for he has to pay both to the labourer as well as to the Government and the wages of labour have not gone down in proportion to the decrease in the price of commodities. It has been said that if we can ask the Government to make a distinction between a big and a small ryot there is a better chance of getting the sympathy of the Government. As regards the person owning a large extent of land, as I have already shown, nothing remains to him after paying the Government, but the small ryot who actually cultivates his own land makes something because it is the wages of his own labour, but even then there is not much left for him to meet his other expenses. I would certainly welcome, as suggested by some hon. Member, if a distinction is made between the small pattadar and a big ryot or a big landholder. If Government are prepared to accept that suggestion, personally I would be satisfied. An ordinary pattadar who pays Rs. 50 and less, even according to Government's own calculation, cannot be making annually much profit and, if Government is prepared to give full remission to all such pattadars, let them not give any remission to the others. Will they do it?"

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* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ I hope the hon. Member will conclude his speech.”

* Mr. K. KOTI REDDI :—“ There are a number of sources by which, if only the Government have a will, they can get the amount necessary to give relief to the ryot. Other Governments had the will and they have been doing it, and other countries are taking measures in order to meet the situation that has arisen on account of the economic depression. If this Government can be convinced to take a sympathetic attitude towards the ryot who pays the Government, let them come to his rescue immediately instead of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. There are many ways by which they can meet the present situation. They can remit 25 per cent and I am sure even if they remit 50 per cent it would not be much. As a matter of fact, even to-day I received a petition from the ryots of my district bemoaning of their condition and asking me to take the petition to His Excellency the Governor and make proper representations on their behalf. What the ryot in the village is keenly feeling is, when he, who pays every one, is actually suffering, how can this heartless Government pay such high salaries to Government officials. When the prices of commodities went up and this Government proposed increase of salaries, this Council did not grudge to increase the salaries of officers and when the prices come down—not twofold but even fourfold,—is it not fair for us to expect these officers to share the distress of the ryot, not merely by a 10 per cent cut, but even much more than that in order to help the ryot who has helped him in times of need? That is the direction in which Government ought to proceed first; and if they cannot do that, there is the surplus. If such surplus cannot be utilized on an occasion like the present when there is so much distress, what is the use of that? I do not think a better occasion would come to the Government to use the large surpluses at the disposal of the Government.

“ I can suggest some other sources but as the time at my disposal is very short, I can only appeal to the Government to have some heart for the ryot who has been helping the Government and everybody.”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ Further discussion upon this resolution will continue to-morrow.”

The House then adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. the next day.

XIII.—PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE.

U.O. Note a No. 6766-C-5, dated 22nd January 1934, with reference to the answer to the supplementary question to Legislative Council Question No. 410 answered on 8th November 1933.

R. V. KRISHNA AYYAR,
Secretary to the Legislative Council.